

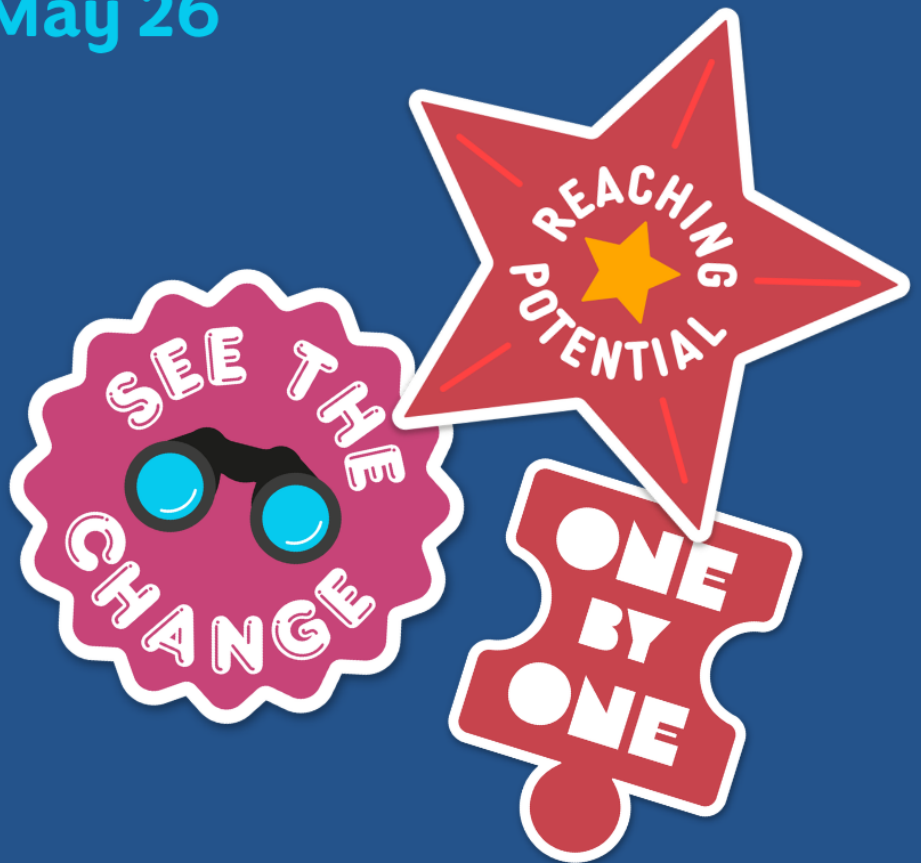


Starfish

Impact Report

September 2022 to May 2025

With additional impact highlights
for June 25–May 26



Children
& Youth

**'Every child deserves to have a
Starfish Mentor in their lives!'**

(Teacher)

SUMMARY

This report presents the impact of Starfish, The Salvation Army's schools' mentoring programme, between September 2022 and May 2025, with additional impact highlights from June 2025 to May 2026.

It outlines the programme's purpose, theological foundation, delivery model and reach, before exploring evidence of impact gathered through Outcomes Star data, mentee feedback, school surveys and corps reflections.

The report shows how Starfish has supported children and young people to grow in confidence, strengthen emotional wellbeing and engage more positively with school, while also strengthening partnerships between corps, schools and local communities.

Alongside celebrating the difference made through trusted one-to-one mentoring, the report considers the value of the programme, key learning from delivery and opportunities to sustain and strengthen Starfish for the future.

A Starfish Impact Report Summary, highlighting the key findings, is available here: [Starfish | Salvationist](#)

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1. WELCOME

Welcome to the **Starfish Impact Report**, covering the period from **September 2022 to May 2025**, with additional impact highlights from **June 2025 to May 2026**.

This report outlines the work of Starfish over this timeframe, highlighting the impact of mentoring on children and young people and reflecting on the outcomes achieved through the programme.

At the heart of Starfish is the belief that every young person deserves to be seen, supported and encouraged. Throughout this reporting period, mentors have walked alongside children and young people, building trusted relationships and providing a safe space for growth, reflection and positive change.

This Impact Report tells the story of that journey. It celebrates the courage of mentees, the commitment of mentors, and the collective effort of corps, divisions, headquarters and schools working together to support children and young people to thrive. Through stories, reflections and outcomes data, this report highlights not only what was delivered, but also the difference that mentoring has made in the lives of those involved.

*‘Starfish gives children a safe space to express themselves ...
and build relationships with trusted adults.’
(Teacher)*

2. WHAT IS STARFISH?

Starfish is a Salvation Army mentoring programme, supporting children and young people aged 9 to 16 in schools. Starfish aims to make a difference to young people, one by one. It is inspired by the story of the man who throws stranded starfish back into the sea one by one. Challenged on what difference it can possibly make to the thousands of beached starfish around him, he replies: 'It made a difference to that one!'

Across the UK, children and young people are experiencing growing levels of vulnerability, including poverty, poor mental health, exploitation, loneliness and educational disengagement. For the first time, more than one million children and young people in England have been referred for mental health support.¹

‘There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river.
We need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in.’
(Desmond Tutu)

The Salvation Army has always stood in the river, responding with compassion to those who have been swept downstream. Starfish builds on that commitment by going upstream: offering early intervention mentoring, recognising early warning signs and acting before crisis becomes entrenched.

Starfish offers early help focused on emotional health and wellbeing, including personal development and life skills. Working within a school's student wellbeing support, Starfish provides committed and trusted adults to work with children and young people who need some additional support without which they would be at risk of not meeting their full potential.

Starfish uses the Outcomes Star, My Mind Star^{TM2}, to promote the positive emotional wellbeing of the mentees and to support the journey of change. This industry standard tool is used to evidence and measure progress in a range of important areas of life. Using the Outcomes Star helps mentees to understand the motivation, beliefs and skills that are needed for them to create that change for themselves and encourages them to be active participants in their own process of change.

Local corps register to bring Starfish to their community and identify those who wish to become mentors. After completing training, these mentors work directly in schools, supporting the mentees identified by the school as most likely to benefit from mentoring. Schools refer pupils to the programme, ensuring that support is targeted and responsive to each child's and young person's needs.

¹ Children's Commissioner for England Report 2024/25

² My Mind StarTM © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd. See www.outcomesstar.org.uk for full copyright details.

STARFISH OFFERS...

Support for schools

- Free mentoring provision
- Strong school-corps partnerships
- Locally embedded delivery
- Wrap-around support through corps.

Trusted relationships

- Consistent one-to-one mentoring with committed adults
- Safe space to talk and be heard
- Trauma-informed, relational approach that protects, stabilises and strengthens
- Enjoyable, creative sessions that make mentoring fun and engaging.

Early help

- Timely intervention before difficulties escalate
- Emotional wellbeing support
- Confidence and self-esteem building
- Improved engagement with school.

Growing potential

- Tailored support for individual needs
- Life skills and personal development
- Resilience building
- Goals set and progress tracked with Outcomes Star.

Mission in action

- Ministry that reaches beyond the walls of corps buildings
- Whole corps ownership, united around serving children, young people and families
- Mentors growing in discipleship, compassion and awareness of God at work
- Relational presence that brings dignity, belonging and hope.

3. THEOLOGICAL BASIS

Starfish exists because children and young people across our communities face increasing pressures - mental health, wellbeing, social, academic and relational - and many lack the trusted adult support they need to flourish, with schools reporting rising anxiety, low self-esteem and growing vulnerability among pupils. As an early-help, relational and preventative programme, Starfish responds by providing committed mentors who help build resilience, confidence and wellbeing in partnership between corps and schools.

Theologically, Starfish is rooted in the *Missio Dei* - the belief that God is already at work in every young person's life - and mentors join this divine initiative through compassionate presence and authentic, non-coercive relationship. Inspired by William Booth's holistic view of salvation and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's call to stand alongside those who suffer, Starfish is intentionally grounded in The Salvation Army's identity to **Love God, Love Others**, and integrates seamlessly with the five Mission Priorities. Starfish sees mentoring as a ministry of **with-ness** and **place-sharing**. In faithful presence and real relationship, Christ is encountered - and young people are invited towards **Fullness of Life with Jesus**, experiencing **shalom**: wholeness, belonging and hope.

For a fuller explanation of the rationale and theology underpinning Starfish, readers can explore the complete Rationale and Theological Reflection booklet.

4. HOW THE IMPACT WAS MEASURED

This report brings together a range of information to demonstrate both the reach and the impact of Starfish. It highlights the lived experiences of those involved and explores the changes observed in mentees over the course of their mentoring journey.

Data for this report has been gathered through multiple sources. Corps and schools involved in Starfish completed **surveys** reflecting on their engagement with Starfish and the changes they observed. In addition, key documents from the mentoring process were reviewed, including **school referral forms** and **mentee feedback forms**. A further component of the impact evidence comes from the **Outcomes Star** data³ - using the **Star Online** platform.

The Salvation Army Research and Development Department supported this report by collating and analysing data, along with Triangle who assisted with the Star Online data. AI-assisted tools were also used to help identify patterns and summarise findings within the dataset. Final analysis, interpretation and conclusions were conducted by the Children and Youth Department's Starfish Programme team⁴.

³ The Outcomes Star is developed by Triangle and is a family of evidence-based tools for supporting and measuring change when working with people of all ages. It is an integral part of Starfish mentoring, bringing richness and depth to the programme. There are many different versions of the Outcomes Star. The one used in Starfish is My Mind Star. My Mind Star™ ©Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd. www.outcomestar.org.uk

⁴ Including the Wales Divisional Youth Specialist.

5. DELIVERY OF STARFISH

5A. WHO STARFISH REACHED

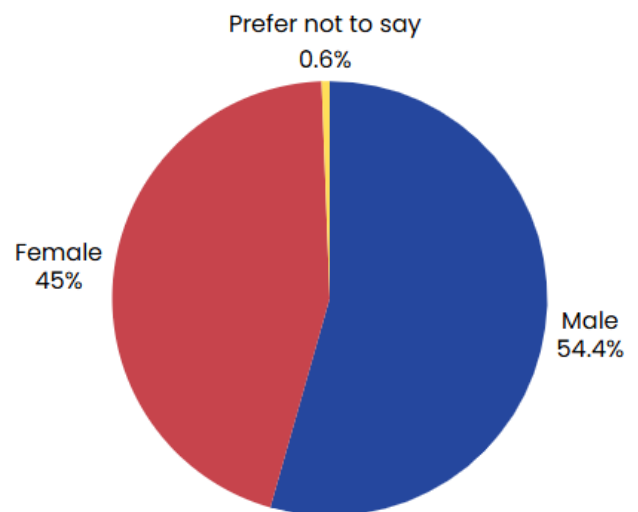
MENTEES

During the reporting period, **331** children and young people received one-to-one mentoring through Starfish. These children represent a diverse cross-section of ages, backgrounds and experiences, united by the fact that schools identified them as needing additional, targeted support.

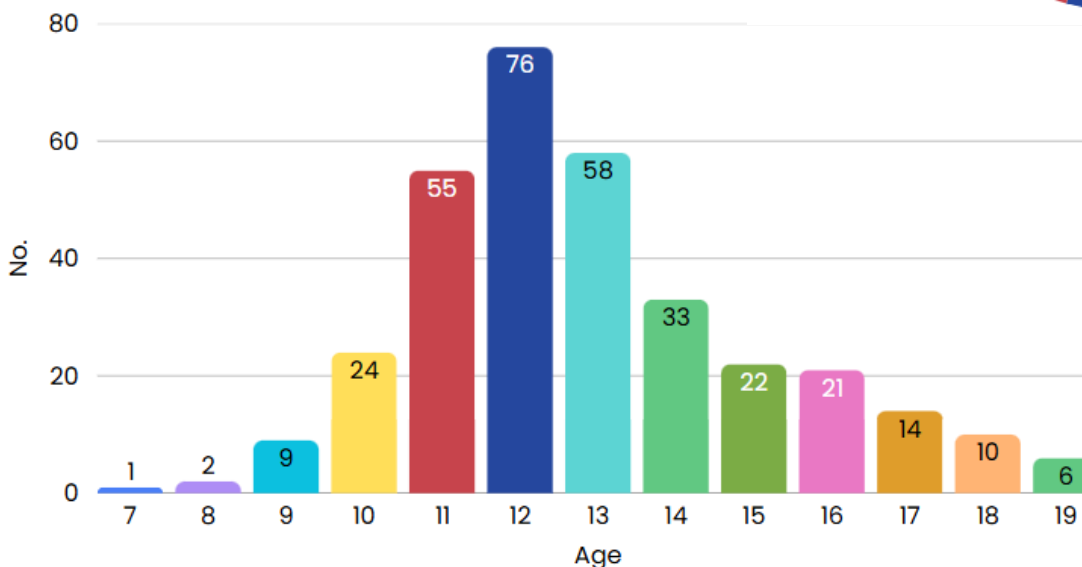
Age and Gender

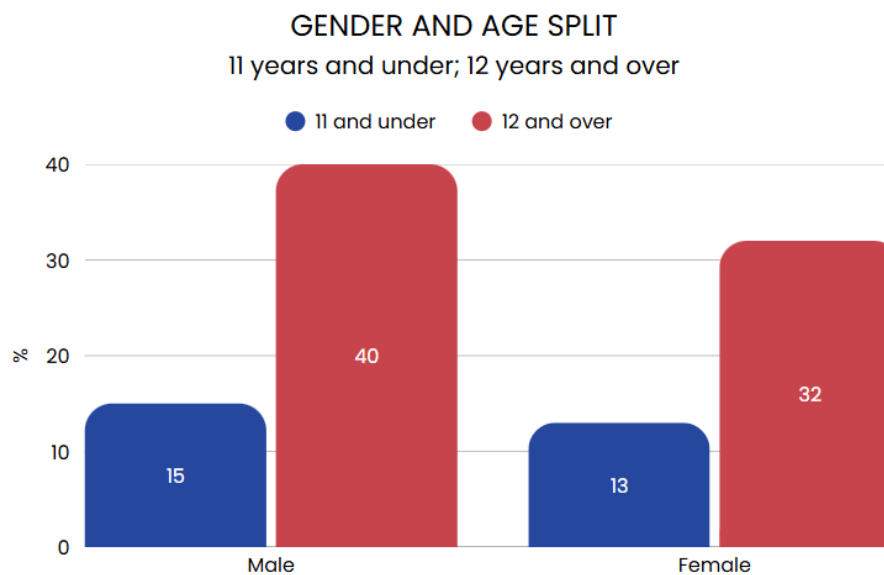
Starfish supported children and young people aged **7 to 19**, with the largest proportion in the 11 to 13 age range, reflecting Starfish's strong presence in both primary and secondary settings. The participant age range extends beyond Starfish's original 9 to 16 target, showing broader reach, especially post-16. Schools have referred older pupils, including sixth-formers, and - due to strong school relationships with mentors - these mentees have been supported successfully.

MENTEE GENDER



MENTEE AGE





Ethnicity

Ethnicity data was optional within Star Online for this time period. Consequently, a significant number of mentees have no ethnicity recorded, limiting the ability to produce a full breakdown. Data available is shown in the following table.

	No of mentees
White - British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh	185
Not completed	118
White - Other	11
Prefer not to say	6
Black or Black British - African/Caribbean/Other	5
Asian or Asian British - Indian/Pakistani	3
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	2
Other	1

Why Mentees Were Referred to Starfish

Children and young people were referred to Starfish because they were experiencing multiple and often overlapping challenges. Referrals rarely reflected a single issue; instead they highlighted the complex realities many children and young people face.

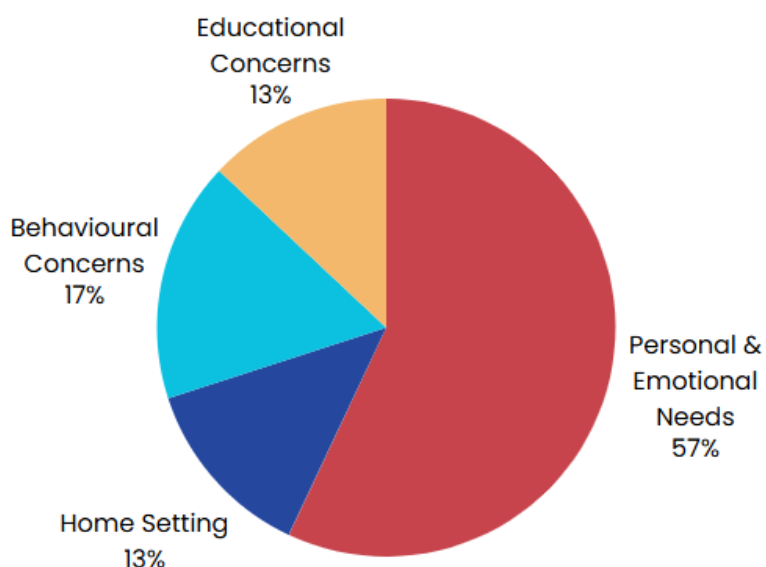
The most common reasons for the referral were in the **personal and emotional wellbeing** category (57%), with the struggle to **share feelings/emotions** (on 56% of referral forms), **low self-esteem** (55%) and **lack of confidence** (52%) the most cited for referral across all categories.

Mentees were also referred due to concerns about **educational engagement or progress** and for those experiencing **behavioural difficulties / anti-social behaviour** across school, home or community settings. The highest referral in these categories was for **disruptive, challenging behaviour or bullying at school**, indicated on 31% of received referral forms.

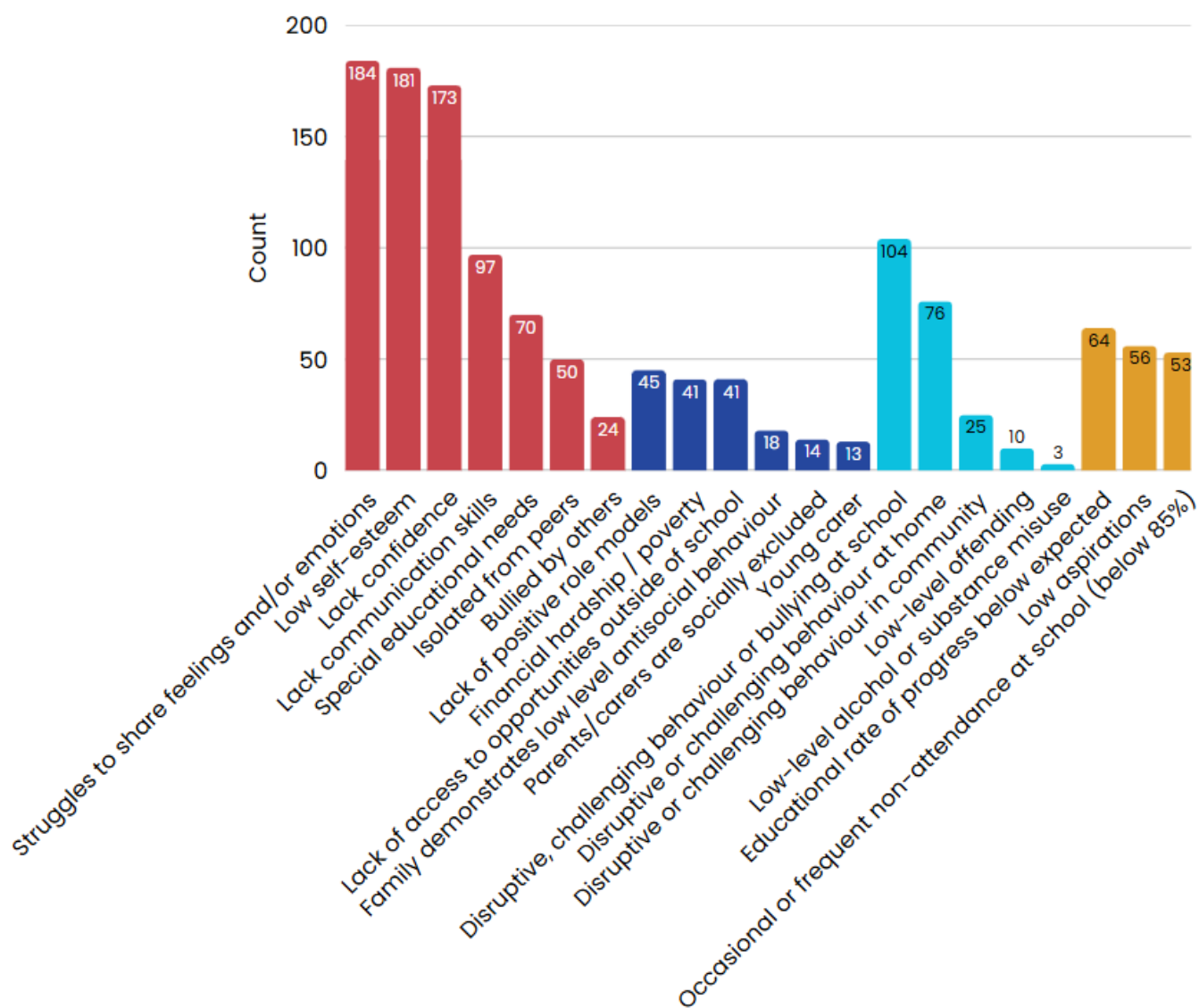
For many mentees, challenges extended beyond the school gate. Referrals highlighted financial hardship, caring responsibilities, limited access to positive activities outside school, and a lack of positive role models.

Together this data paints a clear picture: Starfish supports children with wide-ranging needs, for whom relational mentoring can play a vital stabilising role.

Referral Categories



Referral Reasons



Additional Support Needs

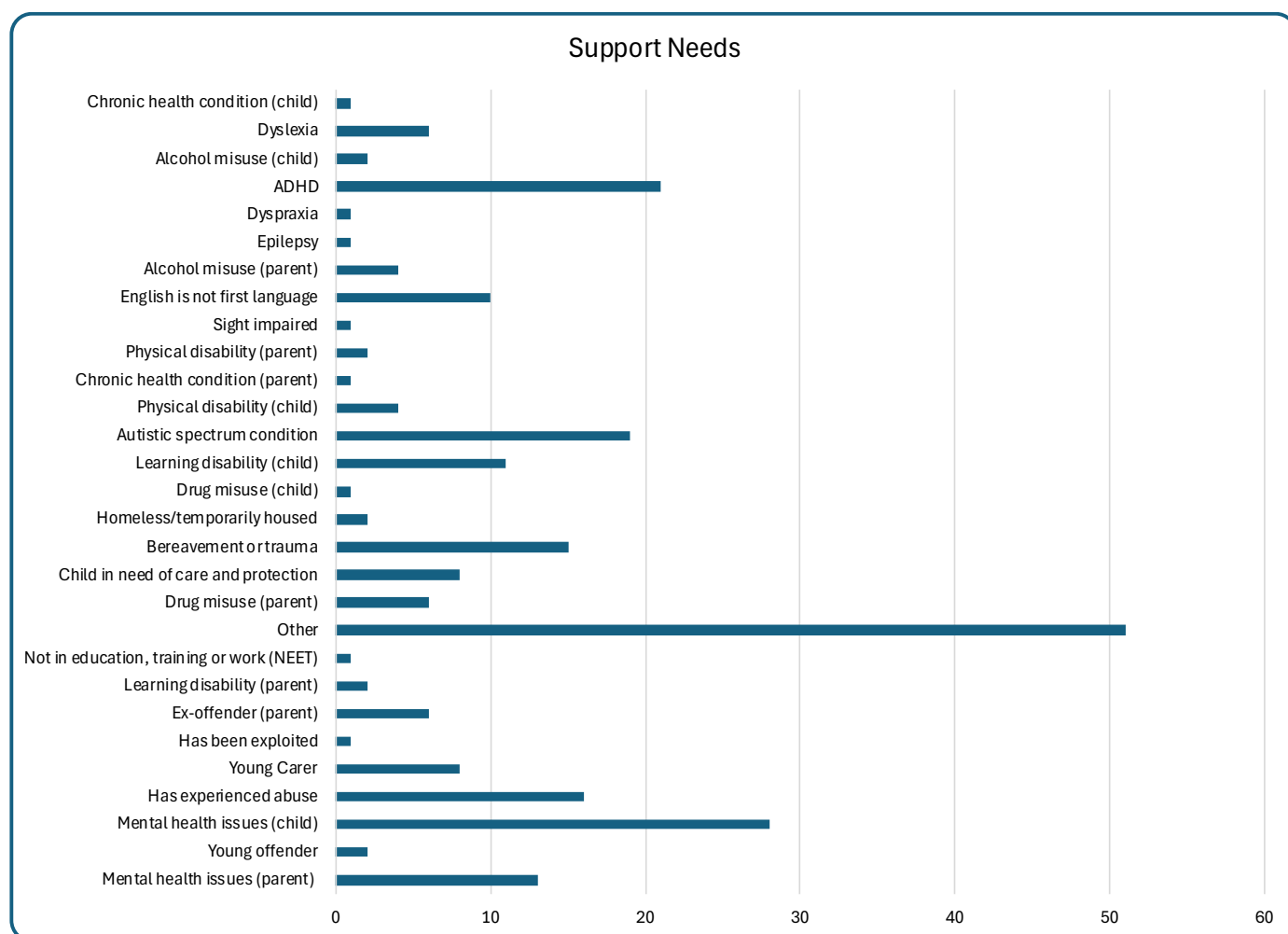
To complement the above data sourced from the Starfish referral form, Star Online also provides further insight into the needs of mentees. Mentors record each young person's details and select any relevant additional support needs. Across 142 mentees, a total of 246 needs were identified, highlighting the complexity of many mentees' circumstances.

This included:

- 3 mentees with seven different identified needs each
- 2 mentees with six identified needs each
- 3 mentees with five identified needs each
- 6 mentees with four identified needs each

The highest additional support needs indicated through Star Online (as seen below) are ADHD, autism and mental health issues (child).

There is also a high number recorded under 'other'. This is largely because some needs identified on the referral form - such as lack of confidence, low self-esteem, behavioural difficulties, bullied by others and non-attendance at school - are not currently available as selectable categories within Star Online.



SCHOOLS

Starfish mentoring took place in **67 schools: 49 primary and 18 secondary schools**.

The strong engagement from schools reflects confidence in Starfish and the local corps, as well as the value placed on mentoring as part of wider pupil support.

Survey responses were completed by 36 primary and 16 secondary schools. (Some schools did not participate in the survey because they had only recently started Starfish.)

5B. HOW STARFISH WAS DELIVERED

DIVISIONS AND CORPS⁵

Children and young people were supported across **40 corps**, representing **12 divisions**. This locally embedded model ensured strong relationships with schools and consistency for children and young people.

MENTORS AND COORDINATORS

Starfish was delivered by **77 mentors**, all of whom were members of or linked to a local corps. Mentors ranged in age from early 20s to 80 years old, bringing a breadth of life experience to their role.

- 77% of mentors were female
- 23% of mentors were male

The number of mentees each mentor worked with ranged from 1 to 10, with the majority of mentors having two or three mentees.

A total of **38 Starfish coordinators** supported programme delivery, overseeing safeguarding, school liaison and mentor support. All the coordinators were also active mentors (included in the 77 figure above), strengthening continuity between coordination and frontline delivery.

Paid and Volunteer Roles

Starfish is underpinned by a culture of volunteering, with nearly a third of mentors contributing on a voluntary basis, alongside mentors in other paid Salvation Army roles and corps officers giving of their time to take part in mentoring.

- Volunteer mentors: 31%
- Mentors in other Salvation Army employed roles: 44%
- Officers: 25%

Included in this number were:

- Six divisional children's workers (DCW) trained and actively mentoring.
- Three divisional youth specialists (DYS) trained and actively mentoring.
- One DCW trained and in supporting role.

⁵ Corps is a local Salvation Army church; division is the regional area that oversees and supports corps and centres.

- Three DYS's trained and in supporting role.
- Three local full-time paid Starfish coordinators.

This mix of volunteer and paid roles helps Starfish keep delivering consistently, rooted in community and built on trusted relationships.

MENTORING ENGAGEMENT

Mentoring Sessions

The exact number of mentoring sessions was not formally recorded. However, based on an assumed 10 to 12 sessions per mentee, the estimated total number of sessions delivered ranges between **3,310 and 3,972**.⁶

Each mentoring relationship lasted on average **14 weeks**, with sessions typically held weekly (usually excluding school holidays) and lasting 45-60 minutes per session.

Outcomes Stars

Starfish uses the Outcomes Star, including My Mind Star™⁷, to promote the positive emotional wellbeing of the mentees and to support the journey of change.

- **521** Outcomes Stars were completed during the reporting period.
- **68%** of mentees (225) completed **more than one Outcomes Star**.
- **98% of all stars were completed collaboratively**, with mentees actively involved in identifying their own starting point and progress.

⁶ 331 mentees x 10 sessions – 331 mentees x 12 sessions = 3,310 and 3,972

⁷ My Mind Star™ © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd. See www.outcomesstar.org.uk for full copyright details.

5C. STARFISH PROGRAMMES ACROSS THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND

TERRITORY BY DIVISION



Two mentors worked in multiple corps, hence the total of mentors on the map is 81, rather than 77.

6. IMPACT OF STARFISH

6A. MENTEES' EXPERIENCE AND IMPACT

STAR ONLINE AND JOURNEY OF CHANGE

A significant part of the evidence of the impact of Starfish on mentees comes from the Outcomes Star data. This section of the report focuses on the changes seen in mentees' mental health and wellbeing over the course of mentoring.

Mentees complete an Outcomes Star - My Mind Star™⁸ - at the start of the mentoring relationships and again at the end of the intervention (and possibly additional stars if mentoring continues for an extended period of time). Mentees rate themselves at one of five stages across seven key mental health and wellbeing areas⁹: **feelings and emotions, healthy lifestyle, where you live, friends and relationships, school/training/work, how you use your time, and self-esteem** (see diagrams below).

During the reporting period,

- **331 mentees** completed a baseline Outcomes Star at the start of mentoring.
- **225 mentees** had comparable progress data between their first and second Star¹⁰.
- **173 mentees** completed additional Stars over a longer period of engagement¹¹.

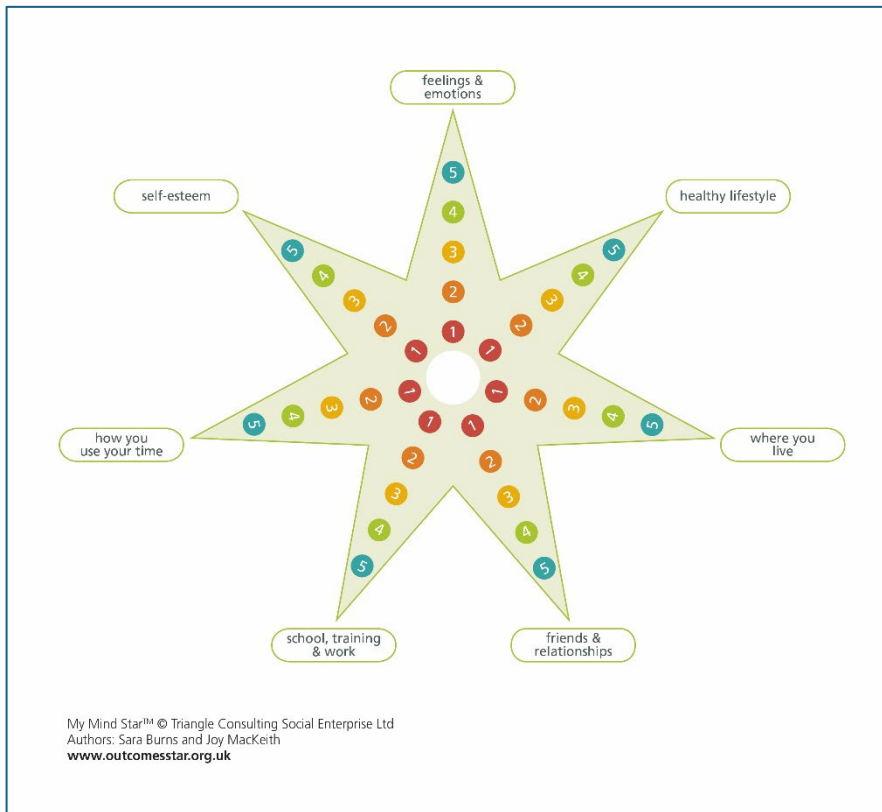
In total, **521 Outcomes Stars** were completed, with **98% completed collaboratively** with the mentee. This reflects the relational and reflective nature of Starfish, with mentees actively participating in identifying their own starting point and progress.

⁸ My Mind Star™ © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd. See www.outcomesstar.org.uk for full copyright details.

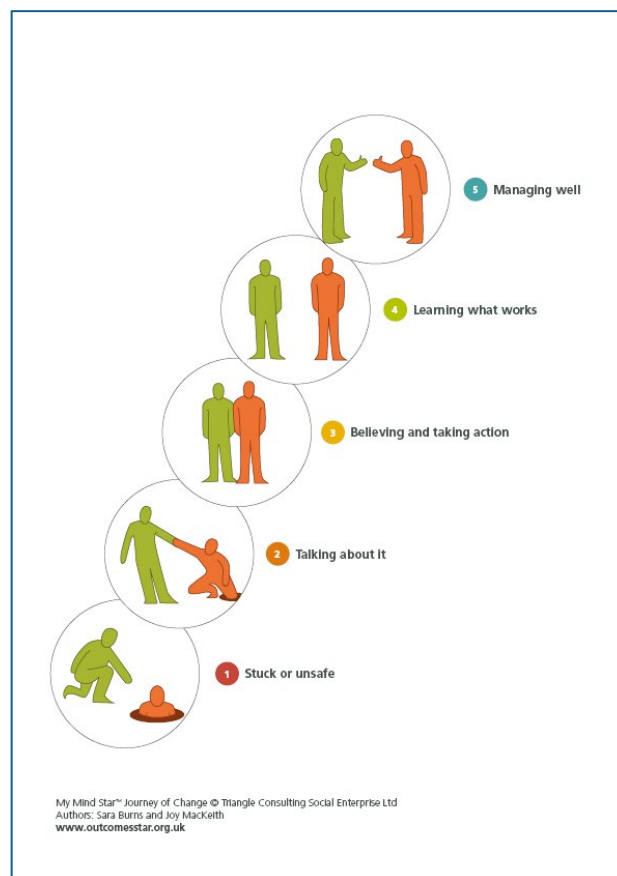
⁹ Further detail on the My Mind Star scale is included in the Appendix.

¹⁰ The number is less than the starting cohort mainly due to mentees who had not yet completed their mentoring programme by the end of the reporting period.

¹¹ Each mentee generally receives between 10 and 12 mentoring sessions. At the request of schools, and where capacity allows, some mentees receive support over a longer period. During this reporting period, the highest number of sessions received by a single mentee was 30. Mentees receiving extended support typically complete more than the standard two Outcomes Stars (completed at the beginning and end of mentoring), as progress is reviewed at additional points throughout mentoring. The highest number of Outcomes Stars completed by a single mentee during this reporting period was five.



The Journey of Change



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WHERE MENTEES STARTED

At the start of mentoring, data from the first Outcomes Star shows that most mentees entered mentoring with clear wellbeing challenges that were having a noticeable impact on their lives and required meaningful support.

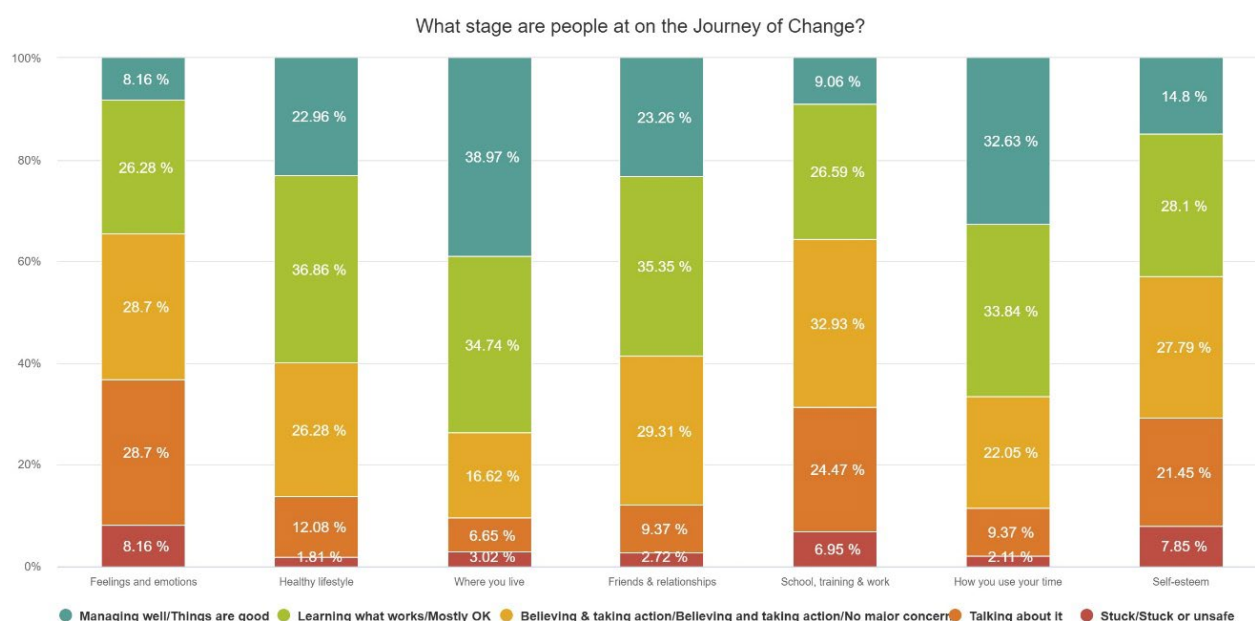
At the start of mentoring:

- 92% of mentees recorded a low reading¹³ in at least one outcome area.
- 81% recorded low readings in at least two areas.
- 66% recorded low readings in at least three areas.

This demonstrates that many mentees were experiencing challenges across multiple aspects of their wellbeing rather than within a single isolated issue.

Snapshot Report - First Outcomes Star

The following snapshot chart shows the percentage of 331 mentees who placed themselves at each stage across the wellbeing outcomes at the start of mentoring, based on their first Outcomes Star.



The stages are¹⁴:

Stage 1 - Feeling stuck or unsafe

Stage 2 - Talking about it

Stage 3 - Believing and taking action

Stage 4 - Learning what works

Stage 5 - Managing well

¹³ A 'low' reading is a Star reading that falls in the first three Journey of Change stages. These are the stages in which a mentor is doing things for a mentee to support them and a reading that falls in these stages can indicate a significant support need.

¹⁴ Journey of Change stage names from My Mind Star™ © Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Ltd. Reproduced under licence. See www.outcomesstar.org.uk for full copyright details.

Across all outcome areas, most mentees clustered in the middle of the scale (stages 3-4), suggesting they were 'believing they can do something and starting to take action' or 'learning what works', rather than consistently managing well.

The greatest areas of need at the start of mentoring were:

- Feelings and emotions
- Self-esteem
- School, training and work

Around one third of mentees rated themselves in the lower stages (1-2) in these areas. This aligns closely with the main reasons for referral to Starfish.

In contrast, mentees generally reported greater stability in:

- Where you live (consistently identified as the strongest area)
- How you use your time

These areas were more commonly associated with higher stage responses, particularly stages 4-5, suggesting they may provide important protective factors and foundations that support progress in other aspects of wellbeing.

Some differences were also evident between groups. Girls were generally more likely to report lower emotional wellbeing and self-esteem, while boys showed greater challenges linked to school, training and work. Older mentees (12+) generally reported greater pressure relating to school, training and work, as well as lower confidence, suggesting increasing complexity of need during adolescence. Younger mentees (11 and under) showed a more spread distribution of responses across the stages, with some reporting relatively positive wellbeing and others already experiencing clear challenges at the start of mentoring.

OVERALL IMPACT: WHAT CHANGED?

The Star Online data shows strong overall progress.

Of the **225 mentees** with comparable pre- and post-intervention data,

- **92% improved in at least one outcome area**
- **79% improved in two or more areas**
- **63% improved in three or more areas**

On average, mentees improved across **three outcome areas**, indicating that change was typically broad and multi-dimensional rather than limited to a single aspect of wellbeing.

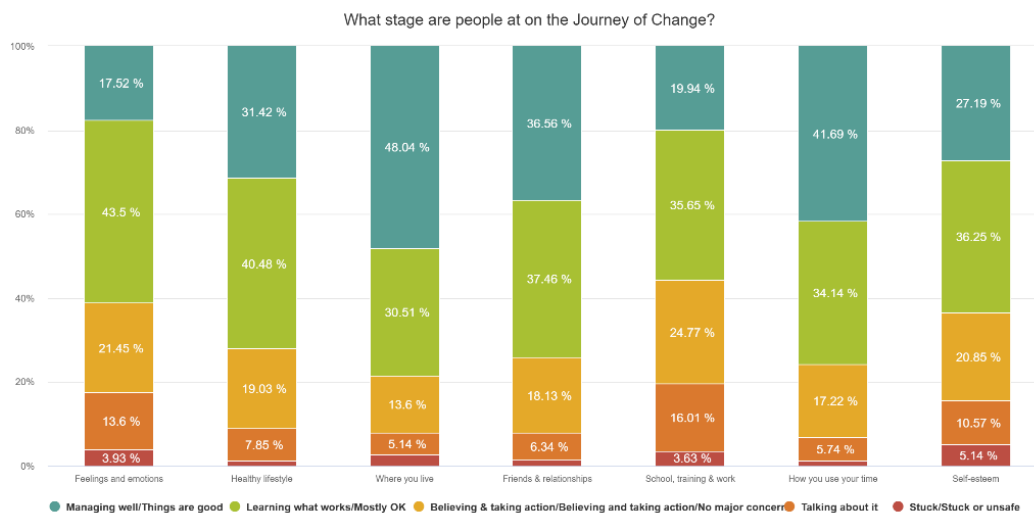
Among those who engaged with Starfish for longer and completed more than two Stars, outcomes were stronger still, suggesting that longer engagement is associated with slightly deeper and more sustained progress. Of these **173 mentees**,

- **95% improved in at least one area,**
- **83% improved in two or more areas**
- **66% improved in three or more areas**

with an average improvement across **3.1 areas**.

These findings demonstrate that Starfish supports change across a wide span of a young person’s mental health and wellbeing. Mentoring does not appear to affect only one isolated outcome; rather, it contributes to broader growth across emotional, personal and school-related areas of life.

Snapshot Report - Last Outcomes Star completed in the time period

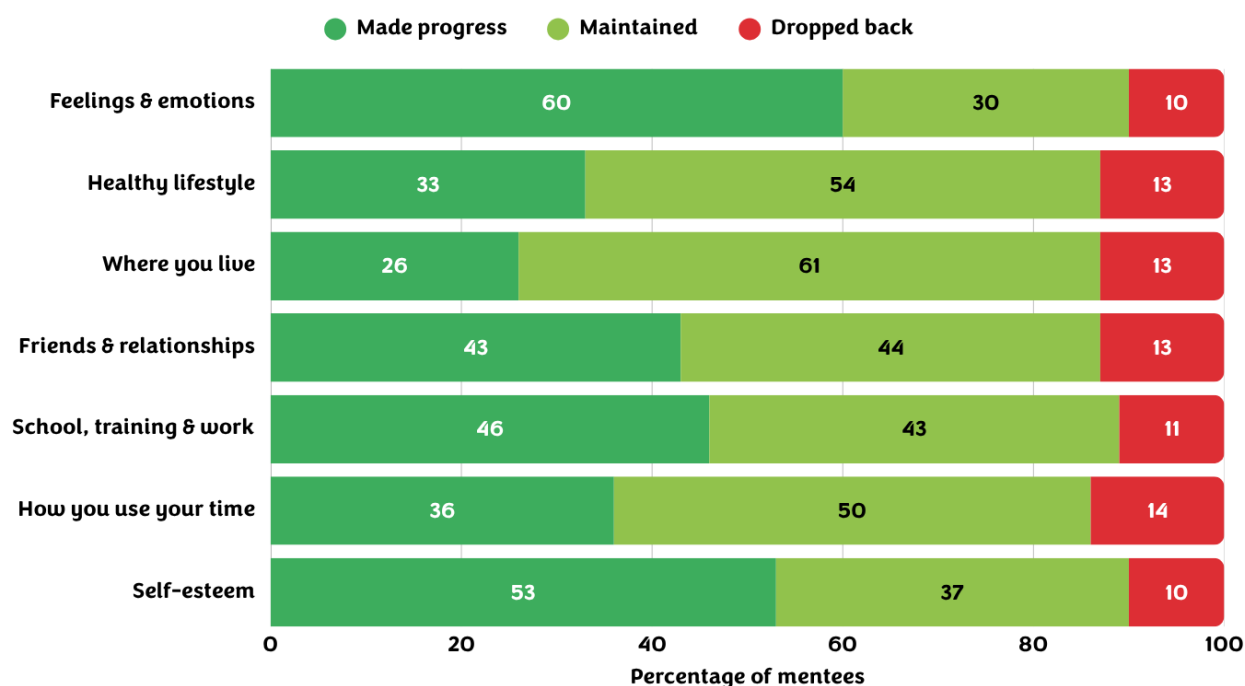


The snapshot chart above shows how 331 mentees rated themselves on their **last Outcomes Star** completed in the time period. However, this includes all mentees, even those who only completed one Star. This means for some mentees the first and last ratings are the same, which could slightly flatten the overall pattern of change.

Compared with the first snapshot, the data still shows a clear positive shift: fewer young people placed themselves in the lower stages (1-3), and more moved into the higher stages (4-5), reflecting movement from *feeling stuck* to *managing well*. This upward pattern was seen across all seven outcome areas (with one small exception - a 4% decrease in stage 4 for Where I Live).

Progress report for 225 mentees who completed two or more stars¹⁵

How much progress are mentees making in each outcome area?



Strongest Areas of Progress

The strongest progress was seen in the areas where need was greatest at the start of mentoring. These were:

- Feelings and emotions
- Self-esteem
- School, training and work

This is significant because it shows that Starfish is not simply generating change in easier or already stable areas, but is helping mentees make progress in the areas that matter most to their wellbeing and day-to-day functioning.

¹⁵ This graph looks at the distance travelled by people, between a baseline and comparison Star, in each outcome area. It shows the percentage of people who have made progress, the percentage who maintained their reading, the percentage who maintained a reading at the top of the scale and the percentage who dropped back between readings. This graph can be used to highlight the areas in which support is being effective and those areas in which people are struggling to make progress.

It is worth keeping in mind that the higher a person's baseline Star reading in an outcome area, the smaller the amount of change that can be achieved. For example, there is less potential change that can be achieved for a person with readings in the fourth stage of the Journey of Change than for a person with readings at the second stage of the Journey of Change. In line with this, baseline Star readings higher on the Journey of Change have more potential to drop back than lower baseline readings. It is therefore useful to look at this report alongside the Snapshot report for the same group of people to get an idea of baseline readings.

Progress data is drawn from the 225 mentees with two Stars; the other 106 had only completed one Star, most likely as they were still mid-mentoring.

- **Emotional wellbeing**

The strongest improvement was in **feelings and emotions**, where **60% of mentees** made progress.

This suggests that mentoring is helping mentees to better understand and express feelings and move from recognising and struggling with difficult emotions toward developing more effective coping strategies, greater resilience and improved emotional wellbeing over time.

- **Self-esteem**

A similarly strong pattern was seen in **self-esteem**, where **53% of mentees** made progress.

This suggests that mentoring is helping mentees grow in confidence, self-worth and belief in themselves. These gains are especially important given that low confidence and low self-esteem were among the most common concerns identified at referral.

- **School engagement**

There was also meaningful progress in **school, training and work**, where **46% of mentees** improved.

This suggests that mentoring is helping mentees engage more positively with school life, feel better supported and grow in confidence in relation to learning. In practice, this points to benefits not only for emotional wellbeing but also for daily participation, motivation and future aspirations.

Maintenance and stability

Not all positive outcomes are about visible movement upwards. In some areas, particularly **where you live** and **healthy lifestyle**, the most common result was maintenance rather than significant change. This should also be understood as a positive finding.

For many young people, maintaining stability in the context of ongoing pressures, uncertainty or disadvantage is itself an important outcome. These two areas in particular are often shaped by wider family, environmental or socioeconomic circumstances that are less directly influenced by mentoring support. In this context, Starfish appears to play an important stabilising and protective role, helping mentees maintain wellbeing and resilience where circumstances may already be challenging.

A similar pattern can also be seen in areas such as **friends and relationships** and **how you use your time**, where many mentees maintained their starting position while others made progress. This suggests that some mentees were already functioning reasonably well in these areas, and that mentoring helped to reinforce or sustain those strengths.

Low levels of drop-back

Across the outcome areas, drop-back remained consistently low, between **10% and 14%**. This suggests that Starfish is not only developmental, helping mentees move forward, but also protective, reducing the likelihood of wider decline.

Any drop-back should be interpreted with care. In some cases, it may reflect increased honesty, self-awareness and trust as the mentoring relationship develops, rather than a straightforward deterioration. It may also reflect temporary external pressures such as exams, family changes or school transitions, or even the development process of puberty. Even so, the overall pattern remains clear: progress outweighs decline in every area.

Patterns of Impact

Some variation can be seen across age and gender groups, but these differences do not alter the overall positive picture.

Girls, particularly those aged 12 and over, tended to show the strongest multi-area progress, especially in emotional wellbeing, self-esteem and school engagement. Improvements for this group were also accompanied by slightly lower levels of drop-back, indicating that progress was not only achieved but also sustained.

In contrast, **boys** generally showed more gradual progress, particularly in self-esteem, school, training and work and friends and relationships, although over half improved in feelings and emotions. Boys also showed higher levels of maintenance across several outcomes, indicating that for many mentees Starfish played an important stabilising role alongside supporting gradual development over time.

Younger mentees (11 years and under) often showed broader change across multiple areas, although outcomes were sometimes more variable. **Older mentees** (12 years +) tended to demonstrate steadier and more sustained progress over time.

These findings highlight the importance of flexible and targeted support that recognises different experiences and patterns of need among children and young people. These patterns may be useful for future learning and development, but the overall evidence remains consistently positive across the cohort.

Conclusion

Overall, the Outcomes Star data demonstrates that Starfish supports meaningful and sustained improvement across multiple areas of mentees' lives.

Nearly all mentees improved in at least one area of wellbeing, and most improved across **several areas** of their lives. The strongest progress was seen in **feelings and emotions**, **self-esteem** and **school engagement** - the areas where mentees (and school referral forms) reported the greatest need at the start of mentoring.

Mentoring appears to have an impact that goes beyond a single isolated outcome; rather, it plays an important role in fostering overall growth and development across emotional, personal and academic areas of an individual's life.

Alongside supporting positive change, Starfish also appears to provide important stability and protection against deterioration, particularly in areas where mentees were already functioning relatively well. Longer engagement is associated with slightly deeper outcomes, reinforcing the value of sustained relational support.

Starfish is both **developmental and stabilising**: helping mentees move forward where support is most needed, while also helping them maintain stability in other areas of life.

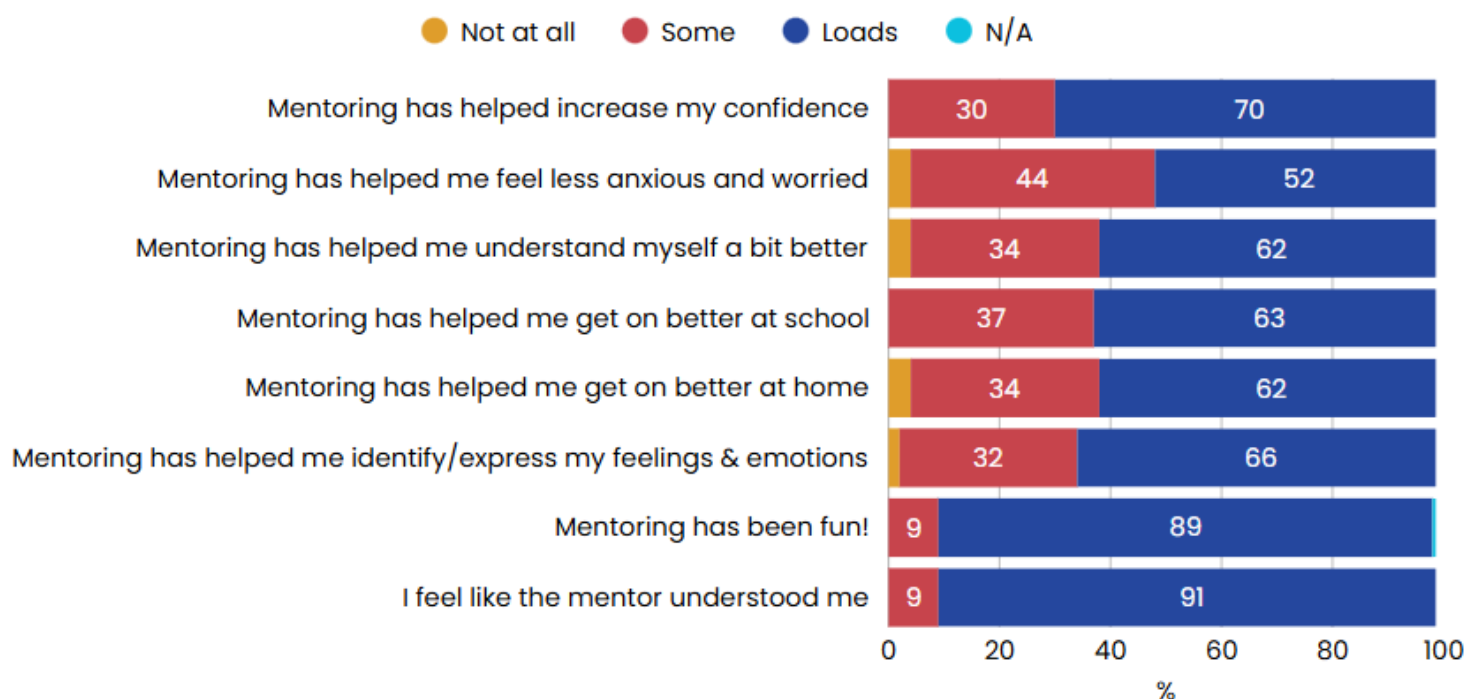
Taken together, the data provides strong evidence that Starfish helps children and young people not only to cope with challenges, but also to build confidence, resilience and wellbeing over time.

HEARING THE VOICE OF THE MENTEE

At the end of the mentoring intervention, 87 mentees completed a review form, providing valuable data on their experiences and the overall impact of Starfish. The responses received were positive, indicating improvements such as confidence, emotional wellbeing and engagement at school. Key findings from the mentee feedback are:

- 100%¹⁶ said that the mentor understood them.
- 100% said that mentoring helped increase their confidence.
- 100% said that mentoring helped them get on better at school.
- 98% said that mentoring helped them identify/express feelings and emotions.
- 98% said that mentoring was fun, with 89% saying it was ‘loads’ of fun!
- 96% said that mentoring helped them feel less anxious and worried.
- 96% said that mentoring helped them understand themselves a bit better.
- 96% said that mentoring helped them get on better at home.

Taken together, these findings reflect a highly positive experience of mentoring for mentees, with strong relationships, increased confidence and improved emotional awareness contributing to a more supportive and engaging overall journey.



¹⁶ All percentages are calculated from the number of mentees who answered each question on the Mentee Review Form SF04, (50 to 54 respondents).

‘What did you enjoy about mentoring?’¹⁷



‘What did you discuss in mentoring?’



¹⁷ Word clouds generated from words included on the Mentee Review Form SF04

6B. SCHOOL EXPERIENCE AND IMPACT

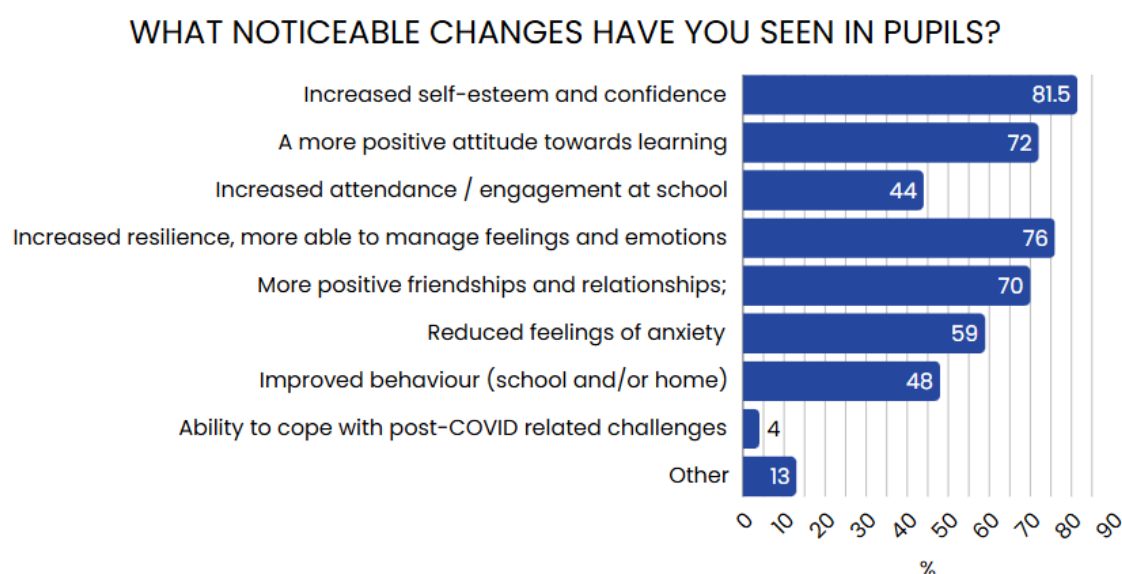
‘Starfish is a valuable programme that benefits pupils, parents, staff and the whole community.’¹⁸

A total of **52 schools** (36 primary, 16 secondary) responded to the survey regarding their experience of participating in Starfish and the impact observed. Two schools submitted the survey twice from different respondents, resulting in a total of **54 responses**.

The findings show consistently strong, positive impacts across all participating schools, with universal endorsement of the value of Starfish.¹⁹

Almost all schools (96%) reported multiple areas of improvement in the mentees, demonstrating that the impact of Starfish mentoring extends beyond a single area of need, reflecting a holistic ‘whole child’ approach.

There is strong alignment between initial referral reasons (such as low self-esteem and managing feeling/emotions) and the improvements reported.

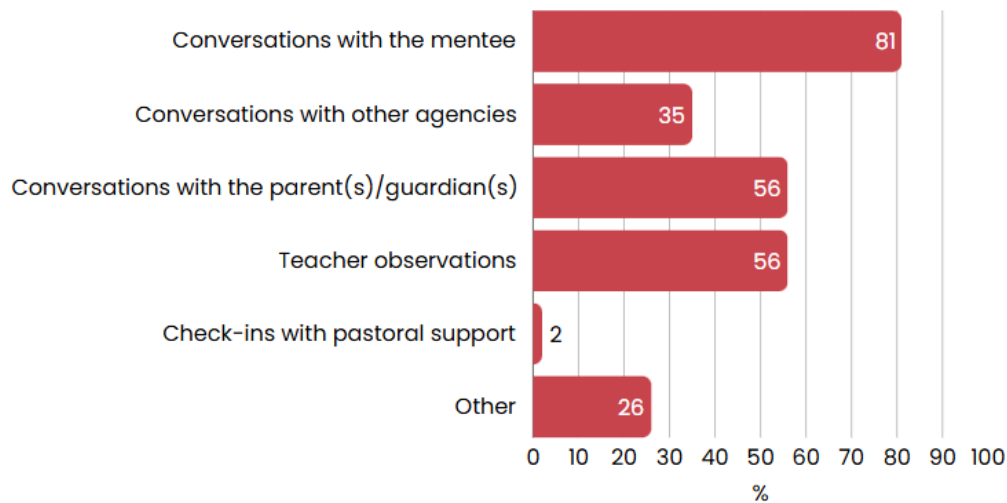


As this chart shows, the most commonly reported impact was increased self-esteem and confidence (81.5%), followed by improved resilience and a greater ability to manage feelings and emotions (76%). Schools also frequently identified a more positive attitude towards learning (72%) and improved friendships and relationships (70%). Reduced feelings of anxiety were reported by 59% of schools, while around half observed improvements in behaviour (48%) and increased attendance or engagement at school (44%). Collectively, these findings suggest that Starfish is supporting both the emotional wellbeing and wider educational engagement of participating pupils.

¹⁸ All quotes included in this section are from the school survey. Additional quotes are presented in the Appendix.

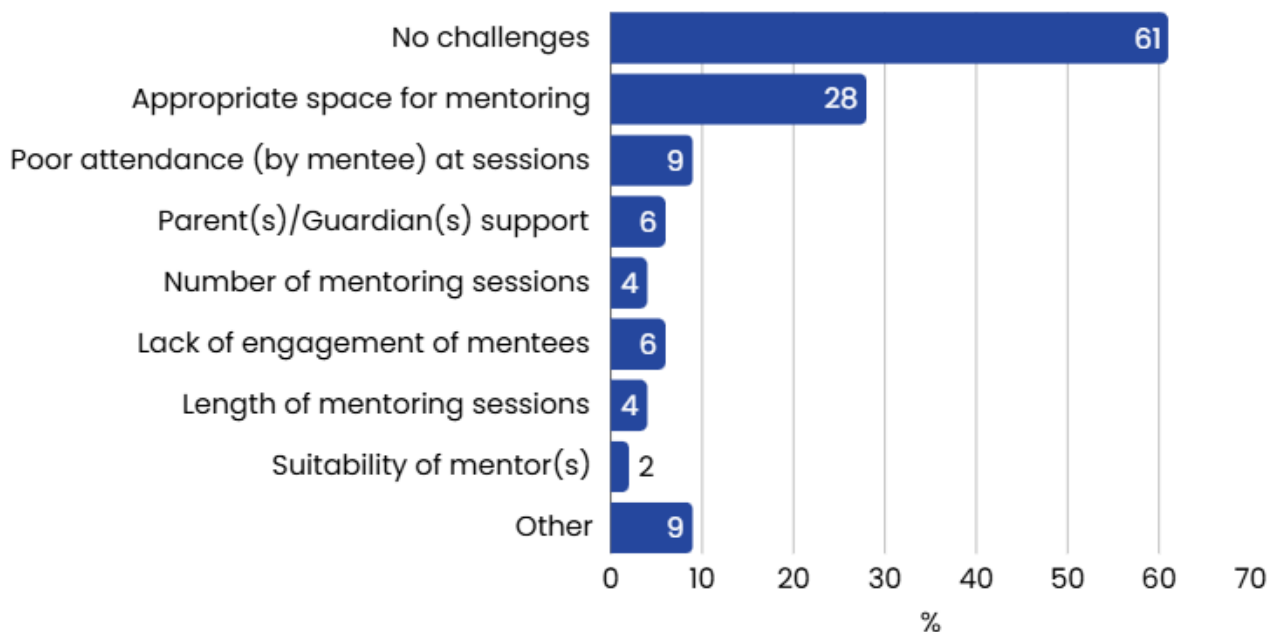
¹⁹ All percentages are calculated from the 54 surveys completed by participating schools.

WHAT FOLLOW UP TAKES PLACE BY THE SCHOOL AFTER A PUPIL HAS COMPLETED STARFISH MENTORING?



Schools provide strong ongoing support after mentoring ends. This typically includes regular check-ins (81%), communication with families (56%), and, where appropriate, involvement of external agencies (35%), helping to sustain progress after Starfish.

WHAT CHALLENGES, IF ANY, HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WHILST ENGAGING WITH STARFISH?



Feedback on delivery is overwhelmingly positive, with 61% of schools reporting no challenges at all. Where issues were noted, they were generally minor and logistical (eg finding space) rather than concerns about the quality of mentoring.

Satisfaction levels are extremely high. **100% of schools said they would recommend Starfish.**

Would you recommend Starfish Mentoring to other schools?



57% of schools suggested no improvements to the programme, indicating Starfish is already highly effective, with any suggestions given focused mainly on expanding capacity and reach, rather than changing the model.

‘We have been so happy with how Starfish has helped in our school and really look forward to continuing.’

‘The programme is effective and from what I have seen is already making a huge impact on the children.’

Qualitative feedback reinforces these findings, with schools describing real changes in mentees’ confidence, emotional regulation, academic performance and overall wellbeing. Examples highlight mentees making **progress with significant challenges such as anxiety, trauma, bereavement and disengagement from education**. Mentees are reported to be more confident in class, more willing to communicate with staff, better able to manage their emotions and more engaged socially and academically.

For example, one school reported:

‘A young child with poor behaviour in school was receiving fixed-term exclusions. Since having mentoring with Starfish along with school input, these have greatly reduced. It has given the child someone who is not a part of the school to confide and share concerns with.’

Another described a clear shift in confidence and emotional wellbeing:

‘L was really lacking confidence in her abilities to achieve anything she perceived as a challenge, but she is now able to face them. She smiles now, which she wasn’t doing in year 10.’

Similarly, a Year 11 student experiencing anxiety and low self-esteem showed sustained improvement:

'After being referred to Starfish, her confidence grew, and so did her academic performance. She learned that it was OK to ask for help and that she didn't have to carry her struggles alone.'

A particularly powerful example of transformation was also shared:

'She came October Year 11. From a different area. No friends. No education in 18 months. No confidence, high anxiety, no emotional resilience. Huge academic improvement. Happy for the first time. Completed all GCSEs and has an apprenticeship. She never would've been able to alone.'

The findings from the school survey broadly translate into five key areas of impact:

- **Emotional wellbeing**

Mentees benefit from a safe, trusted space to express their feelings, build emotional resilience, and develop strategies to self-regulate in challenging situations.

'Starfish gives children a safe space to express themselves, provides them with strategies to self-regulate/re-regulate in heightened situations and build relationships with trusted adults.'

This is further illustrated by mentors supporting mentees through significant trauma and loss:

'One mentee has a number of ACEs, including domestic violence and sexual abuse. Starfish has provided her with a safe space in which to talk and be her genuine self.'

And in cases of bereavement:

'A student has lost his dad and not managing his emotions. The student has put strategies in place by talking more about dad, breathing when anxious, and seeking adult support from trusted adults.'

- **Academic and behavioural benefits**

Improvements in confidence and wellbeing are linked to increased classroom engagement, more positive attitudes to learning, reduced behavioural issues, and support during key academic periods such as exams.

'Some of the students wouldn't have made it through the exams if not for Starfish.'

Behavioural impact is also evident in reductions in exclusions and improved emotional regulation:

'Year 6 boy - repeated behavioural incidents. Angry, anxious and making wrong decisions. His mentor helped him develop healthier ways to express his emotions, and together they worked on building self-esteem, goal setting and conflict resolution.'

- **Tailored and professional support**

Mentors are highly regarded as skilled, flexible professionals who build strong, trusting relationships and provide personalised support aligned to individual mentee needs.

‘Mentors are pleasant, flexible, able to make quick and effective professional connections with pupils. They work well with staff, understand protocols around safeguarding. They have effective tools to measure progress and wellbeing.’

‘Starfish mentors really take time to get to know and understand the children.’

- **Whole-school and family benefits**

Schools report wider impact beyond the individual mentee, including increased pastoral capacity, support for families, and provision for children who do not meet thresholds for other services.

‘This is a valuable programme that benefits pupils, parents, staff and the whole community.’

‘The mentor has also had a positive impact on whole classes and wider family members.’

‘The impact on the whole school environment the Starfish mentors have is wonderful.’

- **Sustained impact and recommendation**

Schools overwhelmingly value Starfish, with 100% recommending it and many expressing a strong desire to continue or expand provision due to its transformational impact.

‘Starfish provides the opportunity for those vulnerable pupils to have time to talk about what matters to them, giving them strategies that they can take into their adult life to manage emotions, challenges and whatever life throws at them.’

‘The impact will hopefully have a life-long impact on our pupils.’

Overall, the evidence shows that Starfish is a **highly effective, targeted intervention** that delivers meaningful improvements in mentees’ emotional wellbeing, confidence and engagement. Its person-centred, one-to-one approach fills a critical gap in school support systems and has been shown to have a positive ripple effect on families, staff and the wider school community.

6C. CORPS EXPERIENCE AND IMPACT

*‘Starfish can be life changing and completely alter a mentee’s trajectory in life’.*²⁰

Surveys asking questions about the corps experience of Starfish were sent to all corps running Starfish during the time period and 37 responses were received. Respondents included corps officers and divisional headquarters staff delivering Starfish. Many were also actively serving as coordinators/mentors themselves, providing authentic insights drawn directly from frontline experience and the heart of Starfish.

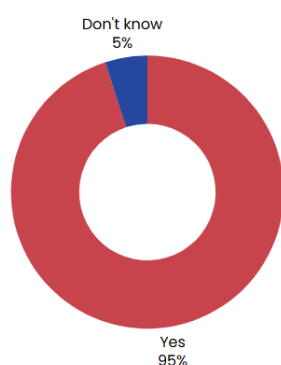
The findings present a clear and consistent picture²¹:

Starfish is a highly valued, effective and transformative ministry that strengthens corps mission, supports schools, improves outcomes for children and families, and enables Salvation Army communities to live out their calling to Love God and Love Others in practical and visible ways.

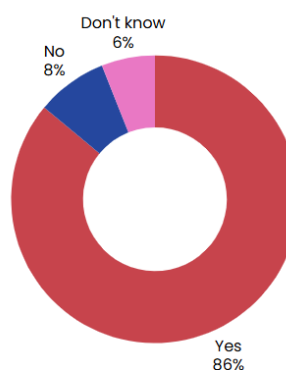
Where Starfish is embedded in schools and communities, local mission flourishing in corps becomes visible through trusted relationships, practical support and transformed lives.

Across the survey, **86% of respondents reported that Starfish has had a significant positive impact on corps mission and outreach**, while **95% said Starfish is important to the schools where they serve**. These figures demonstrate that Starfish is not only meeting individual needs but also creating wider community impact through trusted partnerships and relational presence.

IS STARFISH IMPORTANT FOR YOUR LOCAL SCHOOLS?



HAS STARFISH HAD AN IMPACT ON THE CORPS MISSION AND OUTREACH?



²⁰ All quotes included in this section are from the corps survey. Further quotes are presented in the Appendix.

²¹ All percentages are calculated from the 37 surveys completed by participating corps.

Strengthening mission and community presence

A strong theme emerging from the survey was the way Starfish has helped corps extend mission beyond buildings and into the heart of local communities. Through regular presence in schools, corps have developed meaningful relationships with staff, pupils and families - often where no previous connection existed.

Respondents consistently described Starfish as increasing the visibility, credibility and relevance of The Salvation Army within their communities. Schools see mentors as trusted adults and corps as dependable partners who care for the wellbeing of local children and young people.

'Starfish has meant that we take God's love out of the building and into the local community. It is an opportunity to show that the church cares for the community and is there to provide a listening ear when others can't or do not have the time.'

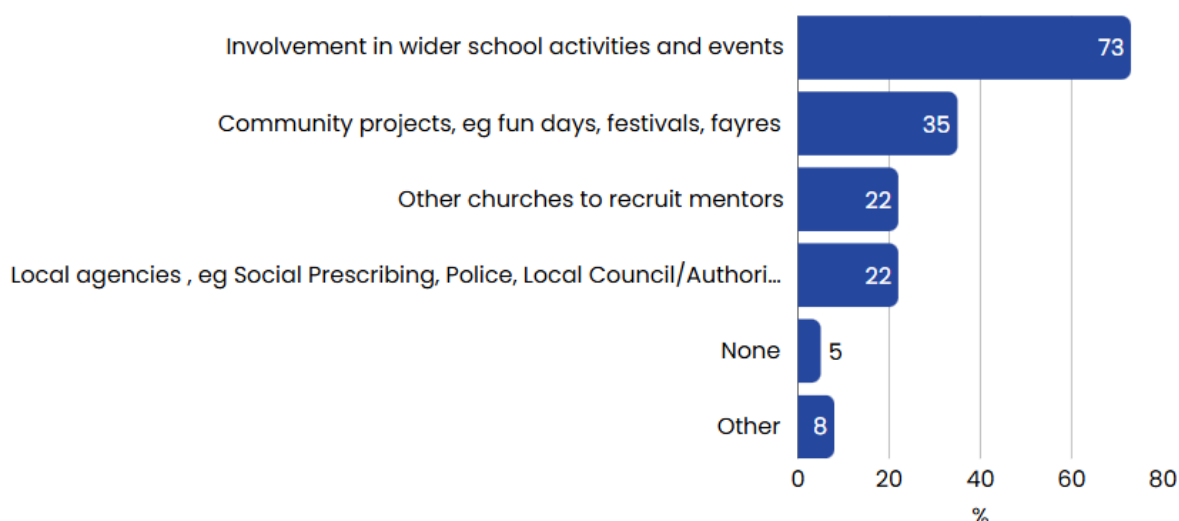
Starfish has also opened doors to wider outreach opportunities. One corps reported that their strengthened relationship with a school enabled them to run Prayer Spaces, after which over 50 young people engaged with their street-based youth work project - more than double the usual number.

One respondent shared the story of a young girl whose confidence had been deeply affected by difficult home circumstances and living in the shadow of her twin sister. Through mentoring she grew in confidence, joined Cubs at the corps, and began to feel valued and loved.

Starfish is also informing and speaking into how mission is understood and expressed. Rather than being centred solely on activity within corps buildings, Starfish demonstrates that mission can be relational, outward-facing and embedded in everyday life.

'The corps is learning that mission might not mean getting more bums on seats on a Sunday.'

IN WHAT WAYS HAS STARFISH OFFERED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP WORK IN YOUR COMMUNITY?



Supporting children, young people and schools

Corps respondents confirm that Starfish is highly valued by schools as a practical and effective support for mentees experiencing emotional, social or behavioural challenges and often acts as a vital **early intervention** while families wait for overstretched statutory services. Respondents reported that mentors provide consistent one-to-one support which complements existing school provision, particularly at a time when many schools are facing significant staffing and funding pressures.

‘The school consider Starfish a crucial element of their pupil support programme.’

‘Starfish is beginning to be seen and used as a holding intervention before CAMHS can pick up the support.’

Schools were said to value Starfish because it offers a free, flexible and relational intervention that can improve confidence, emotional wellbeing, resilience and school engagement.

One respondent shared the story of a young boy who had struggled academically, emotionally and socially. Through being matched with a caring and consistent mentor, he slowly began to trust, open up and engage more positively in school. Staff were so encouraged by the change that they requested additional mentoring sessions.

Another respondent described supporting a nine-year-old boy with additional learning needs who was struggling to attend school. Through regular sessions he was able to talk about his feelings, understand his behaviour, and develop coping strategies that helped him remain engaged in learning.

Survey responses also highlighted that Starfish has made the corps more aware of complex needs facing many children and young people today, including:

- Mental health challenges such as anxiety, trauma and loneliness
- Family instability, domestic abuse and inconsistent adult support
- Poverty, food insecurity and limited opportunities
- Social isolation and low self-esteem
- Exposure to exploitation or harmful behaviours

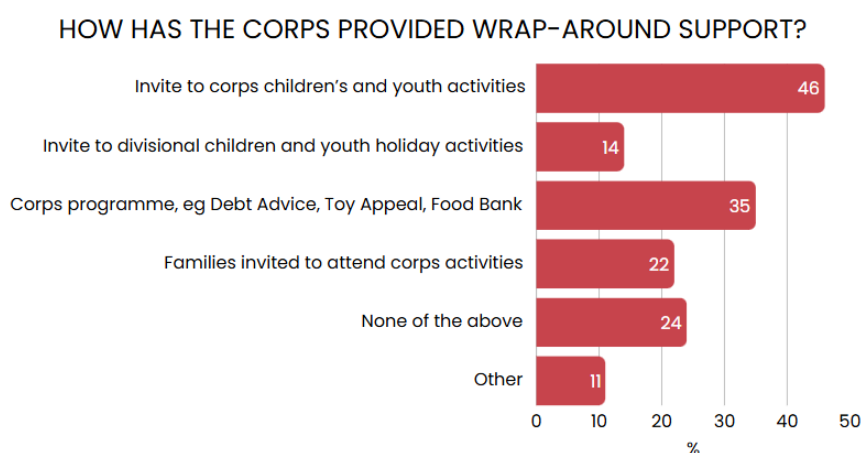
Wrap-around support and family engagement

The survey also highlighted the important role Starfish plays in enabling wider wrap-around²² support for children, young people and their families. Wrap-around support refers to the additional activities, services and opportunities offered beyond one-to-one mentoring that help meet the wider needs of children, young people and their families. This can include social activities, practical assistance, family engagement and opportunities for continued connection with the wider community.

²² Wrap-around care is a holistic and comprehensive approach to support that involves coordinating a range of services and resources to address the diverse needs of an individual and their family. This method ensures that care is not limited to a single aspect of a person's life but instead integrates various forms of assistance – such as educational, emotional, social and practical support – into a cohesive plan. The goal is to create a supportive network that surrounds the individual, promoting stability, wellbeing and long-term positive outcomes.

Respondents described how relationships formed through mentoring often lead to deeper engagement and support for whole families, not just individual mentees. One respondent reflected, *‘Through supporting the children, we had supported the whole family and beyond the time the mentoring took place.’*

In many corps, Starfish mentoring acts as a gateway into broader care and community connection, including children’s and youth programmes, foodbanks, toy appeals, debt advice, holiday activities and family events. **76% of corps respondents reported that their corps provided at least one form of wrap-around support** from the list provided. One-third of respondents (35%) identified more than one form of wrap-around provision. This data demonstrates that Starfish is not simply a one-to-one mentoring programme, but a relational ministry that creates ongoing opportunities for belonging, support and community connection.



Developing discipleship and corps engagement

The impact of Starfish is not limited to mentees and schools. **76% of respondents said that Starfish has positively impacted the discipleship of mentors.** Many described mentoring as a practical way of living out faith and growing spiritually through service to others.

‘I can demonstrate God’s love through my actions without having to use any words. I am able to live out the characteristics of Jesus by showing love, compassion, kindness and understanding. I hope one day the mentees come into contact with The Salvation Army again and think of how they were supported as a child, and know that they can be supported as adults too.’

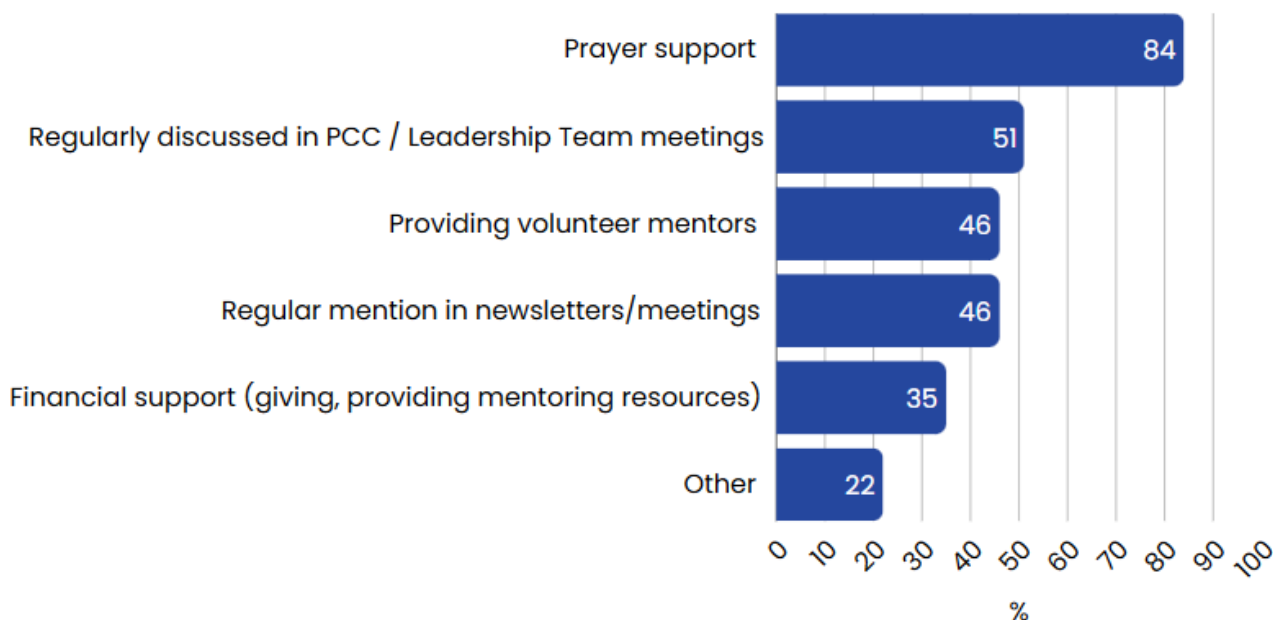
Mentors reported deeper prayer lives, greater compassion, renewed purpose and increased awareness of God at work in everyday situations. Walking alongside children and young people helped them understand discipleship as active, relational and missional.

The wider corps also benefits from involvement in Starfish. **84% of respondents said their corps actively supports Starfish through prayer**, while many also reported leadership encouragement, regular updates, financial giving and volunteering.

‘The church are constantly asking about the young people and their journeys.’

This demonstrates that Starfish can foster a whole-corps sense of ownership in mission, helping congregations unite around a shared purpose of serving children and young people in their communities.

HOW DOES YOUR CORPS SUPPORT STARFISH?



Sustainability and future growth

While the survey findings are overwhelmingly positive, respondents also identified the key factors required to sustain and grow Starfish. The greatest need identified was the recruitment of additional volunteer mentors, with **78% stating that more mentors are needed** to meet the demand.

Other priorities included:

- Greater ownership of Starfish across the corps
- Dedicated local or regional coordination
- Ongoing mentor training and support
- Continued prayer and financial investment
- Reducing administrative pressures on officers and leaders

These findings indicate that Starfish is valued and effective, but continued investment in people, systems and leadership support will be essential for future growth.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF STARFISH IN YOUR CORPS?



Conclusion

The survey responses demonstrate that Starfish is a powerful and practical expression of The Salvation Army's mission, enabling local mission flourishing through trusted relationships, compassionate support and meaningful engagement with schools and communities. It supports vulnerable children and young people, strengthens schools, builds community partnerships and deepens discipleship among mentors.

7. FUNDING, VALUE AND INVESTMENT

For the Starfish programme, The Salvation Army uses a Cost and Value Model to give an overview of the value of the programme being delivered for the finance invested²³. This serves as a tool to facilitate discussions with funders. This model takes both past costs and estimated average cost data based on delivery across the whole programme. It is important to note that the model does not function as a detailed budget or provide a breakdown of costs by individual corps, division and Territorial Headquarters.

Through the Cost and Value Model²⁴ The Salvation Army is able to demonstrate the impact and efficiency of Starfish. Each year approximately £500,000 worth of mentoring is delivered through Starfish. A significant component of this value stems from the recruitment, training and ongoing support of volunteer mentors. These volunteers collectively contribute around £200,000 worth of time annually, which is provided at no cost to The Salvation Army.

Furthermore, the Cost and Value Model estimates that each mentoring session provided has a value of £59 for each child and young person who receives mentoring which is offered free to schools. The Cost and Value Model not only evidences both the costs and the resulting value, but also strengthens The Salvation Army's ambition to sustain and expand Starfish and its impactful work.

Successful fundraising efforts

During this period, the Philanthropy Department (Trust and Major Donor Fundraising) demonstrated its effectiveness by raising £181,000. This notable achievement reflects the department's dedication and strategic approach to securing essential funding, and the ongoing commitment to extending the Starfish initiative throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland Territory.

Allocation of raised funds

The funds acquired were allocated to two main areas. Firstly, they were used to contribute towards the salaries of four Starfish Co-ordinator posts²⁵. These positions were established at both the local and divisional levels, providing vital leadership and support for Starfish. Secondly, the funds supported the operational delivery of services, ensuring the smooth running of activities associated with Starfish, such as training and material.

Philanthropy is passionate about supporting Starfish because it is a programme that brings lasting change through trusted relationships with children and young people. It is a hugely valuable upstream intervention that could reduce the number of adults who seek The Salvation Army's support in later life. By raising funds, Philanthropy enables more vulnerable children and young people to meet with a Starfish mentor on a weekly basis – helping them grow in confidence, resilience and wellbeing.

(Karen Reid, Assistant Head of Philanthropy.)

²³ The Cost and Value Model was developed by the Research and Development Department during the 2021 Starfish pilot.

²⁴ Cost and Value Model version 1.10, 24 February 2025

²⁵ All post fixed term. The fourth Starfish Co-ordinator post commenced in September 2025, although funding for the post was secured within the reporting period covered by this report.

8. BUILDING ON IMPACT: KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR STRENGTHENING STARFISH

Alongside the positive impact shown in this report, this section highlights key areas for consideration to further strengthen Starfish. (Note that these are reported in no particular order.)

1. Capacity and Sustainability

Prioritise coordinator mentor recruitment to meet demand and support sustainability. Feedback from corps and schools indicates that increasing the number of mentors remains one of the most significant priorities for sustaining and expanding delivery.

Increase male mentor recruitment to aid mentee-mentor matching. Recruitment is particularly relevant in relation to gender balance: while over half of mentees are male, only 23% of mentors during this reporting period were male. Data indicates that only around half of male mentees were paired with a male mentor, likely reflecting the limited availability of male mentors (see also point 7).

2. Evidence and Reporting

Improve consistency of monitoring and evaluation data collection. The use of Outcomes Star data provides a strong foundation for measuring impact. However, occasionally data, such as session numbers, are estimated, and feedback sample sizes do not yet fully reflect overall participation. Greater consistency in data collection would strengthen the evidence base and support deeper analysis of outcomes.

Include evidence of quality assurance (supervision, training, mentor support) in future reporting. Quality assurance processes, such as mentor supervision, are embedded within Starfish; however, data evidencing these processes was not gathered for this impact report. Incorporating this evidence in future reporting would provide further insight.

3. Learning and Development

Explore subgroup differences (eg, age/gender). Further analysis could be carried out on the differing needs and experiences of mentee sub groups (age/gender), including how mentor support and training may best respond to these differences while maintaining the relational integrity of the model.

Explore mentor-mentee gender pairing.

Future analysis could explore whether mentor-mentee gender pairings are associated with differences in engagement, relationship quality or outcomes (see also point 1).

4. Wrap-Around Support and Local Mission

Encourage and strengthen wrap-around support. Wrap-around support is a distinctive feature of Starfish and an important enabler of wider family and community engagement. Future development could explore how to help corps further embed and strengthen wrap-around support in ways that reflect local needs and context.

Strengthen understanding of Starfish as an integral part of local mission.

There is an opportunity to help local corps see Starfish not just as a standalone programme, but as an integrated expression of mission, relationship-building and community engagement. This will be strengthened further through the development of Starfish across our Family Services and through closer integration between corps and centres. Starfish's theological and relational approach can also encourage broader thinking about mission, connection and local presence, while deepening relationships between corps, schools, families and the wider community.

5. Strategic Alignment

Align Starfish with the National Youth Strategy and its focus on trusted adults. In December 2025, the UK Government launched its ten-year National Youth Strategy for England²⁶ which includes a commitment to provide an additional 500,000 young people with access to a trusted adult outside the home. As the importance of supportive, trusted relationships in helping children and young people thrive gains increasing recognition, this creates a clear opportunity for The Salvation Army's Starfish programme to **contribute to wider early help, harm reduction and prevention strategies in corps, centres, communities and the youth sector.**²⁷

Taken together, these reflections highlight important opportunities to deepen understanding, strengthen evidence and further enhance the consistency and sustainability of delivery. While the report demonstrates strong impact across many areas, continued learning and reflection will remain important in ensuring Starfish continues to respond effectively to the needs of mentees, schools, communities and local corps.

²⁶ [Youth Matters: Your National Youth Strategy - GOV.UK](#) The report says that nearly 1 in 5 young people don't have a trusted adult in their life outside of home.

²⁷ Potential to explore with the Public Affairs Unit how Starfish can align with and support the National Youth Strategy and the wider shift towards early help and prevention within the sector.

9. CONCLUSION

This Impact Report demonstrates that, between September 2022 and May 2025, Starfish has provided meaningful, measurable and relational support to children and young people across the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Through 331 mentoring journeys, delivered in partnership with 67 schools and supported by 77 trained mentors across 12 divisions, Starfish has consistently helped mentees to grow in confidence, strengthen emotional wellbeing, improve relationships and engage more positively with school.

Outcomes Star data shows that progress is both widespread and multi-dimensional, with the strongest improvements seen in areas of greatest need, particularly feelings and emotions, self-esteem and school engagement. Feedback from mentees, schools and corps reinforces this, describing Starfish as a safe and trusted space where children and young people feel understood, supported and able to develop strategies that continue beyond the mentoring relationship. As an early intervention programme, Starfish works upstream to prevent difficulties from escalating, reduce harm and lessen the likelihood that children and young people will require more targeted services.

Alongside its impact on children and young people, Starfish continues to strengthen relationships between corps, schools and local communities, offering a visible, credible and practical expression of Salvation Army mission. Corps and divisions describe Starfish as a key gateway for partnership working, wider community engagement, and a deeper outward-facing model of ministry - rooted in presence, compassion and 'with-ness.'

Starfish's volunteer mentors and coordinators represent significant value, enabling high-quality support to be offered to schools free of charge, while generating wider social and spiritual benefit through discipleship, prayer and whole-corps participation.

At a time when schools and families are under increasing pressure and statutory services are often overstretched, Starfish offers early intervention that is both timely and effective. The evidence in this report affirms that Starfish is making a difference - one young person at a time - while also building stronger communities around them.

To sustain and expand this impact, ongoing investment will be needed in mentor recruitment, local coordination and support structures that enable Starfish to grow while remaining faithful to its core purpose: trusted adults walking alongside children and young people with hope, care and consistency.

Ultimately, Starfish is more than a mentoring intervention: it is a way of showing up - consistently, compassionately and without conditions - in the places and spaces where children and young people already are. In that faithful presence, Starfish reflects the heart of the gospel: the God who draws near, who listens, who bears burdens, who is found in suffering and who restores hope.

While Starfish does not replace specialist services such as CAMHS, it offers something profoundly human and deeply Christian: a relationship that makes space for healing,

resilience and growth. Starfish points, in quiet but tangible ways, to the fullness of life that Jesus promises, expressed through love, dignity, belonging and hope.

In walking alongside young people one by one, Starfish continues to embody The Salvation Army's calling to Love God and Love Others - so that children and young people might not only cope, but also flourish. It is in these sustained, faithful and trusted relationships that transformation is often most clearly seen - not only in outcomes measured, but in lives quietly and meaningfully changed.

‘Every child mentored is a life improved.’

(Sarah Robinson: Employed Starfish Coordinator, Boston Corps)





Starfish

Impact Highlights June 2025 to May 2026



Children
& Youth

**'Every child deserves to have a
Starfish Mentor in their lives!'**

(Teacher)

10. HIGHLIGHTS FROM STARFISH JUNE 2025 TO MAY 2026

The following data provides an additional snapshot of Starfish delivery and impact from **June 2025 to May 2026**. While the main report covers the full period from September 2022 to May 2025, this supplementary data offers a current view of how Starfish continued to grow and strengthen in the following year.

The infographic highlights key reach, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for mentees during this period. The data is based on all mentees who were active in the time period, even if they started mentoring before June 2025. This reporting period did not include any school or corps surveys.

The outcomes in this snapshot closely mirror those in the main report, showing a **consistent pattern of positive change**. Mentees continued to make progress across multiple wellbeing areas, with strong improvements in feelings and emotions, self-esteem and school engagement. Rates of stability remained high, and drop-back stayed low - reflecting the same developmental, stabilising and protective impact seen previously.

It is encouraging to see Starfish continue to grow in reach and delivery while maintaining the same strong impact on mentees' confidence, emotional wellbeing and resilience. This infographic summarises that continued impact and highlights how the programme has grown as a whole, reaching more mentees, more schools and more communities while maintaining high-quality outcomes.

Reach and Delivery 2025-2026

Starfish reached 333 children and young people through trusted mentoring relationships across schools, corps and divisions.



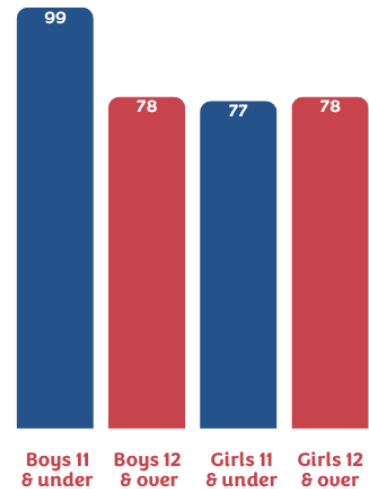
333

children and young people were supported through Starfish



Age range 6 to 16 years

58% of mentees are 10 to 12-years-old



Data includes all mentees who were active in this time period, even if they started mentoring before June 2025.

Starfish was delivered across

49
corps
includes 2 DHQs

13
divisions



90



mentors supported Starfish

24 male mentors



65
female
mentors

85
schools

58 primary
27 secondary

3,330-3,996

estimated total sessions delivered

(based on an assumed 10 to 12 sessions per mentee)



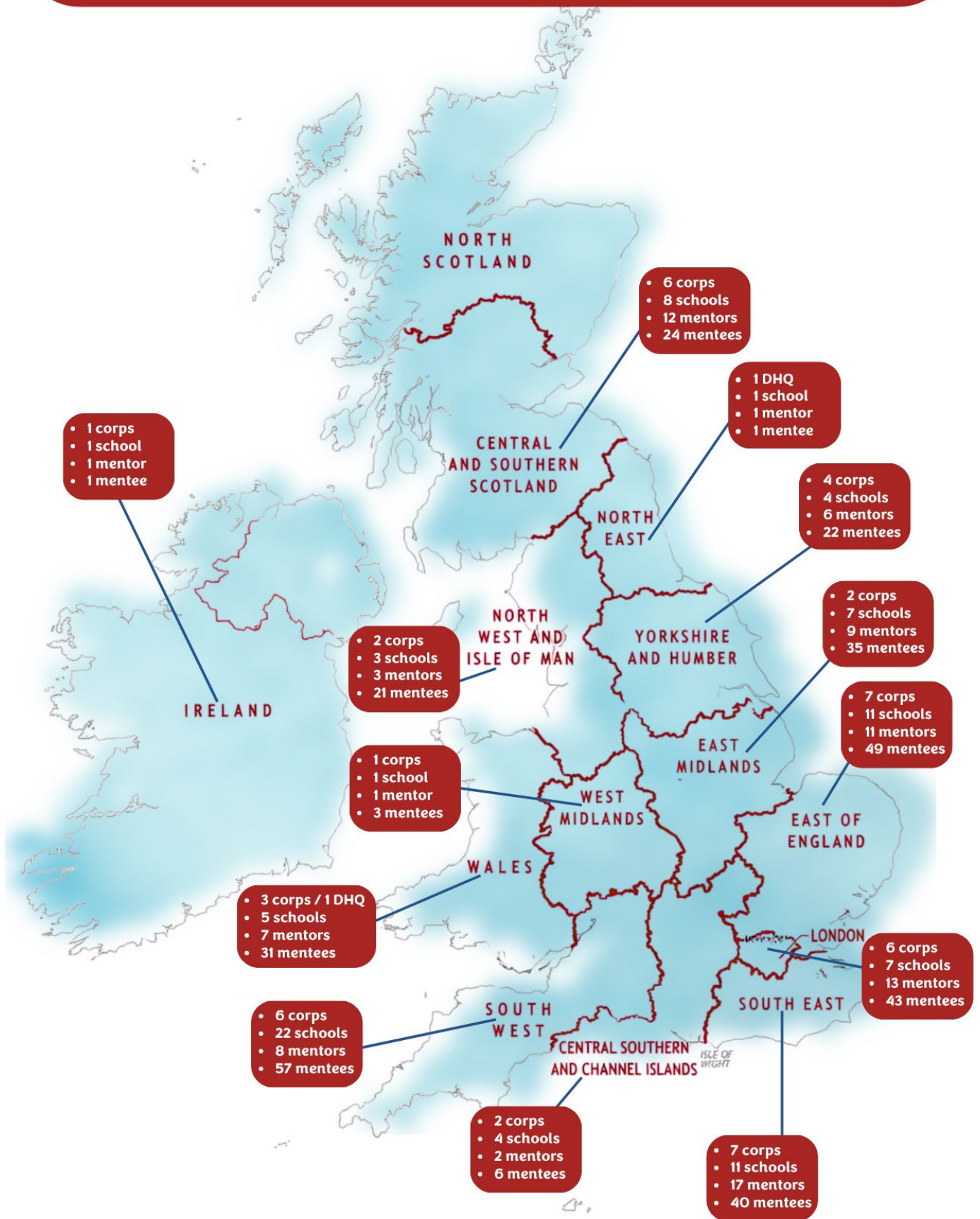
492 Outcomes Stars were completed

44% of mentees completed more than one Star

96% of Stars were completed collaboratively with the mentee

Starfish Programmes

Across the United Kingdom & Ireland Territory by Division, 2025 - 2026



One mentor worked in two corps, hence the total of mentors on the map is 91, rather than 90.

The Impact of Starfish 2025-2026



91%

of mentees made progress in at least one mental health and wellbeing outcome area

76% improved in two or more areas

60% improved in three or more areas



Change is typically multi-dimensional: mentees improved across an average of

3

outcome areas



Feelings & emotions

52%
made progress
39% maintained



Self-esteem

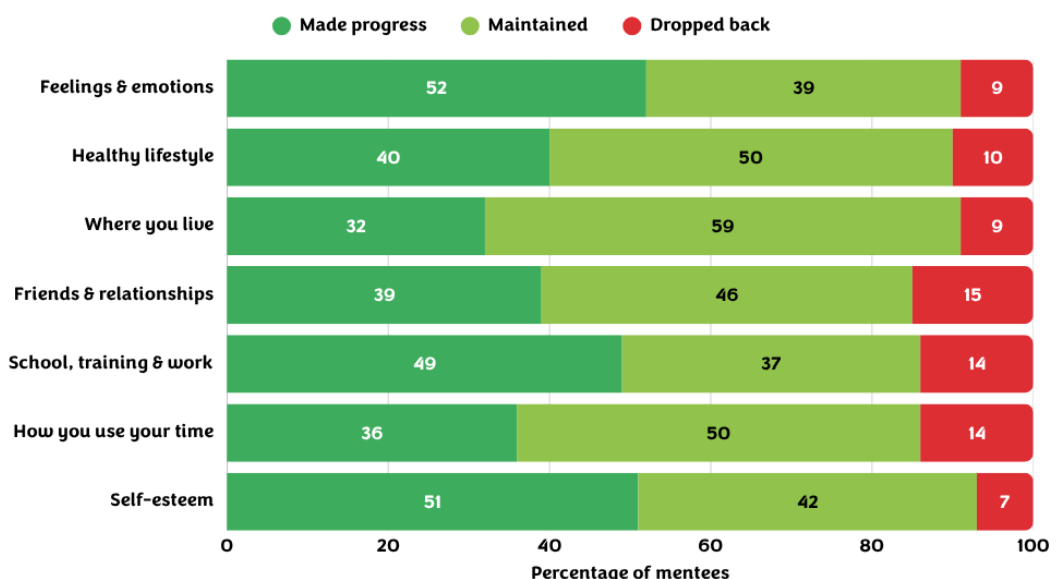
51%
made progress
42% maintained



School (training & work)

49%
made progress
37% maintained

How much progress are mentees making in each outcome area?



Progress data is drawn from the 148 mentees with two Stars.
The other 141 had only completed one Star, most likely as they were still mid-mentoring.

Mentee Voice 2025-2026

What children and young people told us...



100%

said the mentor understood them



99%

said mentoring was fun!



98%

said mentoring increased their confidence



95%

said mentoring helped them get on better at school



95%

said mentoring helped them feel less anxious and worried



93%

said mentoring helped them identify/express feelings & emotions



93%

said mentoring helped them understand themselves better



83%

said mentoring helped them get on better at home

Data gathered from 82 end of mentoring review forms.



'Every child deserves to have a Starfish mentor in their life!'

(School)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: QUOTES AND STORIES OF IMPACT FROM THE SCHOOL SURVEY REPORT

Impact on mentees

‘Every child deserves to have a Starfish mentor in their lives. For pupils lucky enough to take part in the programme it is transformational.’

‘Mentors share our school belief that with the right support and encouragement, life trajectories can be changed for the better.’

‘The benefits for the whole-child in self-esteem and confidence are notable. We have many additional needs/challenges but this has been nurturing, reassuring and supportive. The impact will hopefully have a life-long impact on our pupils.’

‘Our young person has grown in confidence and feels even more valued and respected; she is better prepared for transition to high school as a result.’

‘We have seen consistent improvement of students’ attitude, wellbeing and confidence. Starfish has been beneficial to all students who have engaged, no matter the level of support needed.’

‘It has had a positive impact on our Year 8s who are behaviourally our trickiest year group.’

‘Some of the students wouldn’t have made it through the exams if not for Starfish.’

Emotional wellbeing and safe spaces

‘Students enjoy a safe space to chat and explore feelings, thoughts and behaviours.’

‘Starfish allows children to have a safe space and feel heard.’

‘The Starfish programme provides a place for children to be able to express how they feel, what they are finding difficult or need support with in a safe space. This is something that the school just doesn’t have capacity for.’

‘Starfish gives children a safe space to express themselves, provides them with strategies to self-regulate/re-regulate in heightened situations and build relationships with trusted adults.’

‘The Starfish programme puts children’s emotional wellbeing at the heart of everything.’

Targeted support

‘The 1:1 adult attention is excellent and really benefits the mentees.’

‘The strength of the Starfish lies in its personal, one-to-one approach, inspired by the idea that helping even one individual can make a real and lasting difference.’

‘A great programme, with mentors who really care for both the students and the staff at school and create really bespoke support.’

‘Targeted support for those children who need it. A great system for pupils who do not meet the threshold for other agencies.’

Wider impact on schools and communities

‘This is a valuable programme that benefits pupils, parents, staff and the whole community. Starfish mentors have the capacity to invest in our children in a way that staff simply do not.’

‘The benefits to the young people, the school and the staff are incredible!’

Stories of Impact

Behavioural improvement and reduced exclusions

‘A young child with poor behaviour in school was receiving fixed-term exclusions. Since having mentoring with Starfish along with school input, these have greatly reduced. It has given the child someone who is not a part of the school to confide and share concerns with.’

Building confidence and academic progress

‘L was really lacking confidence in her abilities to achieve anything she perceived as a challenge, but she is now able to face them. She smiles now, which she wasn't doing in Y10.’

‘A Year 11 student was struggling with anxiety and low self-esteem. After being referred to Starfish, her confidence grew, and so did her academic performance. She learned that it was OK to ask for help and that she didn't have to carry her struggles alone.’

Providing a safe space for trauma

‘One mentee has a number of ACEs, including domestic violence and sexual abuse. Starfish has provided her with a safe space in which to talk and be her genuine self.’

Supporting transition to secondary school

‘A girl was extremely nervous and wary about starting secondary school. Starfish mentoring helped support her with strategies to put in place to help transition into Year 7.’

Transformational change through mentoring

‘She came October Year 11. From a different area. No friends. No education in 18 months. No confidence, high anxiety, no emotional resilience. Huge academic improvement. Happy for the first time. Completed all GCSEs and has an apprenticeship. She never would’ve been able to alone.’

Supporting emotional regulation

‘Year 6 boy with repeated behavioural incidents. Angry, anxious and making wrong decisions. His mentor helped him develop healthier ways to express his emotions, and together they worked on building self-esteem, goal-setting and conflict resolution.’

‘We had a student who has struggled with regulating his emotions and would often become dysregulated, and his coping mechanisms would be flight. However, after talking with his mentor they have been able to use strategies to support him when he is feeling dysregulated.’

Providing ongoing support for grief or family issues

‘The weekly mentor sessions have enabled a child whose grandmother is terminally ill to have someone to talk to, to be able to express their emotions and let off steam, as well as engage in activities that are fun and tailored specifically to him.’

‘Young lad who recently lost his father has begun to chat with the mentor about his feelings.’

‘A student has lost his dad and not managing his emotions. The student has put strategies in place by talking more about dad, breathing when anxious, and seeking adult support from trusted adults. The student has stated that the mentor has made him feel valued and less sad.’

Attendance and engagement improvement

‘A Year 7 pupil struggled with attendance due to high levels of anxiety. Mum struggled to get her to school, and she refused to attend any lessons. She has had two terms of Starfish; her attendance has greatly improved, she is attending lessons and has not missed a Starfish session.’

Positive ripple effects on families and school

‘All of our children who have worked with the Starfish mentor talk fondly of the mentor, as well as the mentor now being a well-established regular visitor to our school. The mentor has also had a positive impact on whole classes and wider family members.’

‘The mentor’s ability to support a family is admirable. She is very committed to her role and makes a difference with the families she works with. It would be great to have her in school on a regular basis to work with more of our children and families.’

APPENDIX TWO: QUOTES AND STORIES OF IMPACT FROM THE CORPS **SURVEY REPORT**

Relationship building with schools and communities

‘We have a presence within the school whereas we wouldn’t have if we didn’t do Starfish.’

‘Starfish has consolidated and built relationships with the schools we are working in.’

‘Starfish has helped us build relationships with the school community and they know I am from the church.’

‘Starfish has created opportunities for engagement within the local school and increased the visibility of the corps within the community.’

‘Schools have been able to approach the corps for other help such as toy appeals, and relationships have strengthened as a result.’

‘We have been able to connect with families for the food bank and outreach camp, and the corps are providing prayer support.’

Impact on mission and faith in action

‘Starfish has helped the corps expand its view of what mission is and how it can go outside the walls of the building and into the community.’

‘Starfish has given the corps a new way to see outreach to the community.’

‘The church are constantly asking about the young people and their journeys.’

‘Starfish has had an impact on me because I can demonstrate God’s love through my actions, without having to use any words. I am able to live out the characteristics of Jesus by showing love, compassion, kindness and understanding.’ (Mentor)

School partnerships and support

‘All our schools are very positive about the support they receive from the Starfish team.’

‘The school consider Starfish a crucial element of their pupil support programme, as more mentors become available the school will continue to expand the programme.’

‘Starfish is such a valuable resource to the school, especially as children are more and more struggling with expressing how they are feeling or working through difficult situations that can’t be addressed by the class teacher.’

‘The school finds Starfish a great help for pupils that are struggling with various things.’

‘Starfish is a resource they can depend on to help them provide for children who currently have little support within school.’

‘The staff members are also so appreciative of the extra support for their families. They welcome us in with open arms.’

‘It’s important for schools to have their students supported through all the things life throws at them so that they can thrive and be more whole both in school and out. Starfish can be life changing and completely alter a mentee’s trajectory in life.’

‘We identify that the current mental health crisis and lack of adequate provision we are seeing, [and] the rise in mental health issues with young people, means that Starfish is beginning to be seen and used as a holding intervention before CAMHS can pick up the service.’

‘Starfish has highlighted many other needs ... such as county lines, mental health crisis and social media addiction.’

Stories Of Impact

Coping with family illness

‘One of my girls had her life turned upside down when a parent became suddenly ill and hospitalised. Hearing her talk things through and begin to open up has been amazing. She is now in a position where she has skills that will help her explore life and what that will look like moving forward. Thank you for Starfish - it’s amazing!’

Consistency and emotional growth

‘At one of our local primary schools, there’s a young boy who’s been fighting an uphill battle. School has always been a challenge for him - academically, emotionally, socially. Through Starfish mentoring, he was paired with a consistent, caring adult who shows up just for him. Slowly he started to open up, to trust, and the school has noticed. They’re deeply grateful for the support and have even asked if more sessions could be added - because they see the difference one mentor can make.’

Building self-esteem

‘Starfish has helped develop the self-esteem of this child and show them that they are worth something and can achieve and enjoy their life. This child came thinking they were useless, but showing an interest in their art has developed this and shown them that they are good at something. This has shown them that the mentor’s faith is something which means they show love and care for all.’

Supporting additional learning needs

‘A boy who is 9 years old was struggling to attend school due to his additional learning needs. Starfish sessions allowed him time to talk about his feelings, how he found school difficult and why it resulted in behaviour that often got him into trouble. Sharing his

feelings helped him feel better, and together with school staff we encouraged strategies to cope and stay engaged in learning.'

Family and sibling support

'In an attempt to build up the relationship between siblings, the children are now attending weekly equine therapy sessions, and it is a joy to see them talking about their shared experiences with each other.'

Learning to shine

'The mentee was really struggling with home life and very withdrawn. Her twin sister overshadowed her. But the mentee engaged with every session and even joined Cubs in the corps. She felt valued and loved and was so excited when she asked me to visit her at Cub camp and I was able to. Having the one-to-one time was precious and helped her have something for herself.'

Transforming a young person's life

'A student came to Starfish seven months ago, a shell of the person she knew she used to be. She had moved around a lot, witnessed domestic violence, and had taken on caring responsibilities at home. From the first session she spoke openly about her struggles. The day after we met was the first day she didn't purge, and she has never done so since. She has gained confidence, learned to trust someone outside the family, improved her self-esteem and now recognises her worth. Seeing the change has been a beautiful thing to witness - a complete transformation.'

Re-engagement with school

'One pupil has re-engaged at school having had a prolonged absence. Parents and school were very anxious. They have engaged with Starfish, attendance is now almost full-time, and they are ready to enter P7 without Starfish support.'

Building relationships through shared activities

'Starfish gave the opportunity for a little boy who played Fortnite every night to take part in two-player role-playing board games. He learnt the value of playing games with people and took the game home to play with his mum. Fullness of life is living in community and relationship with people, just like Jesus is fully in relationship with us.'

Impact beyond the individual

'After mentoring two children from the same family last year, the mother of the children sought support as she was struggling with her eldest child. Through supporting her children, we had supported the whole family and beyond the time the mentoring took place.'

Community Impact

'Starfish has opened the door to a stronger relationship and presence with the school, which has allowed us to run Prayer Spaces in the school and the opportunity to pray with young people. The Friday after we did one Prayer Space over 50 young people engaged with our street-based youth work project called 'Hot Spot', whereas we normally get approx. 20, and the culture of calmness was distinctly different; even the PCSO's noticed the difference.'

Faith expressed through action

‘Starfish has had an impact on me because I can demonstrate God’s love through my actions with the mentees, without having to use any words. I am able to live out the characteristics of Jesus by showing love, compassion, kindness and understanding.

APPENDIX THREE: MY MIND STAR SCALES

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My Mind Star™ Scales

The Outcomes Star for young people's mental health and well-being

For each of the seven questions, choose the answer that best describes you most of the time.

1 Stuck or unsafe 2 Talking about it 3 Believing and taking action 4 Learning what works 5 Managing well

1 Feelings and emotions

Dealing with feelings, recognising unhelpful thinking, ways to feel better, managing mental health



- 5 I mostly feel positive and can cope well with difficult feelings
- 4 I'm finding ways to feel better and can mostly deal with difficult feelings, with support
- 3 I'm taking steps to feel better emotionally but it's not yet working for me
- 2 I often feel really bad but I recognise that this needs to change and am talking to someone about it
- 1 I often feel really bad or have lots of difficult thoughts. I can't see how anyone can help

2 Healthy lifestyle

Food, sleep, being active, managing any physical health conditions, doctors and treatment



- 5 My lifestyle is mostly healthy, and this helps my mental and emotional well-being too
- 4 I'm learning how to have a healthy lifestyle, with support
- 3 I'm taking steps to have a healthier lifestyle but am not yet really seeing the benefits
- 2 My lifestyle isn't healthy, but I can see it's a problem and am talking to someone about it
- 1 My lifestyle isn't healthy. I don't recognise it's a problem or don't see how it can change

3 Where you live

A stable home life, safety, positive routine and having the basics, managing a tenancy



- 5 I have a stable home life
- 4 I mostly have the stability I need at home but there are a few issues
- 3 There are no major concerns about my home life but I need more stability
- 2 There are concerns about my home life but my family or carers and I know things need to change
- 1 There are concerns about my home life. No one can help with this

4 Friends and relationships

Support from friends, partners, peers, family or other adults, bullying, knowing who to trust



- 5 I have the friends that are right for me and feel well supported by people in my life
- 4 I'm finding ways to feel connected and supported by people in my life, but there are a few issues
- 3 I'm taking steps to improve my friendships or get more support, but it's not yet working for me
- 2 I feel alone or the people in my life don't support me but I'm talking to someone about it
- 1 I feel alone or the people in my life don't support me. I can't see how anyone can help

5 School, training and work

Getting the most from school, training and work



- 5 I'm getting on well with school, training or work and am well supported
- 4 I'm finding what works for me with school, training or work, with support
- 3 Things are starting to change with school, training or work but it's not yet working for me
- 2 I know I need help with school, training or work and I'm talking to someone about it
- 1 There are problems with school, training or work. I can't see how anyone can help

6 How you use your time

Things you enjoy, fun and relaxation, avoiding activities that put you at risk



- 5 I'm spending my time in ways I enjoy and that are good for me
- 4 I'm learning positive ways to spend my time, with support
- 3 I'm starting to change the way I spend my time but haven't yet found what works for me
- 2 I can see that what I do with my time affects how I feel and I'm talking to someone about this
- 1 I don't enjoy how I spend my time, or do things that could harm me. I can't see how that could change

7 Self-esteem

Being comfortable with who you are, seeing your strengths, confidence, sense of belonging



- 5 I mostly feel good about myself
- 4 I'm finding ways to feel good about myself, with support
- 3 I'm taking steps to feel better about myself, but my self-esteem has not yet improved much
- 2 I can see that self-esteem is an issue for me and am talking to someone about this
- 1 I don't feel good about myself. I can't see how anyone can help

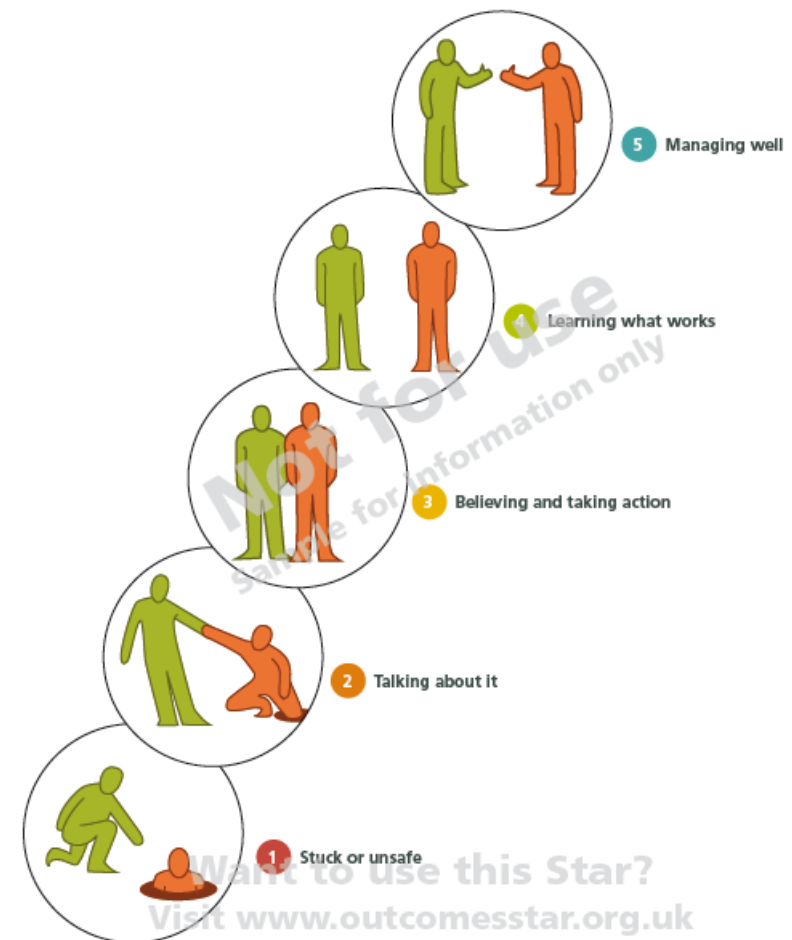
Now mark on the Star Chart where you are on the Journey of Change for each of the areas and connect the points to get a picture of the areas that are working well and those that are causing difficulties. This picture will help you and those supporting you to agree what areas to work on and start thinking about the changes you want to make and the support you need.

Want to use this Star?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

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The Journey of Change



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